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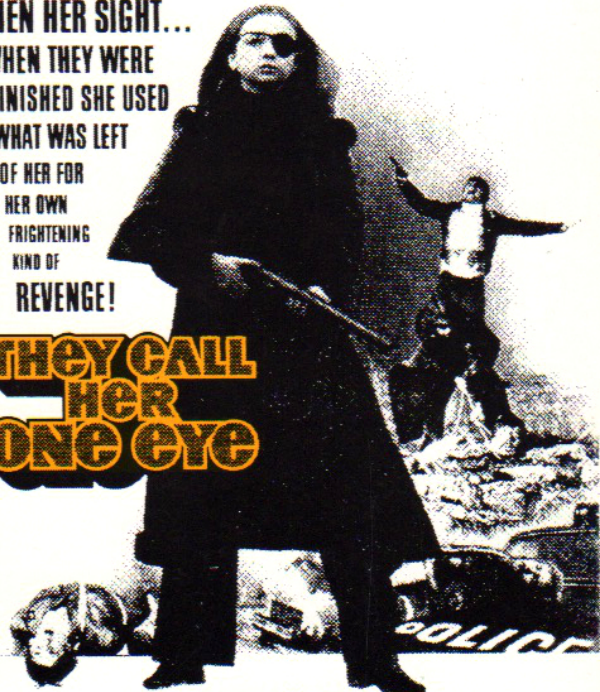
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VINTAGE 1970's XXX SINEMA

ANAL ULTRA VIXENS 1970-79. Busty superstars Linda McDowell, Vanessa Del Rio & Lisa Deleew do anal. Disco soundtrack.



BUTTERFLIES '76. Harry Reems, Maria Forsa. Nymph-like blonde heats up the screen in highly erotic masterpiece by Joe Sarno. Gorgeous color.

DIVINE OBSESSION '79. Small town girl robbed, raped, and abused by New York scum blows her brains out during a live strip act.

DOMINATRIX WITHOUT MERCY '76. Jamie Gillis, Vanessa Del Rio, C.J. Laing in New York rougie shock full of brutal sadomasochism.

EROTIC CARTOON FESTIVAL '76. Teen addicted to XXX comics shows us her favorites: LITTLE ORAL ANNIE, KINGDOM OF CLITORIS, FURTHER ADVENTURES OF SUPER SCREW & many more!



EROTIC DR. JECKYLL '75. Harry Reems, Terri Hall, C.J. Laing. Perverse hunchback and Dr. Jeckyll get laid in hilarious XXX obscurity.

FEMALE CHAUVINISTS '74. Candy Samples, Uschi Digard, Roxanne Brewer. German language, no subtitles.



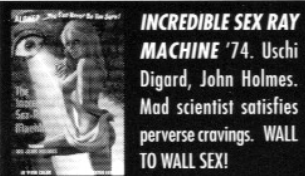
FORCED ENTRY '74. Harry Reems. Vietnam vet slaughters female prey. "THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE OF ADULT CINEMA"-Raw.



HARDGORE '73. Hospital DEATH cult terrorize teenage Maria with meathooks, castration, deathdreams, decapitation, throat slashings & blood orgies!

HEADS OR TAILS '73. Uschi Digard, Rene Bond, Sandey Carey. German language with no subtitles.

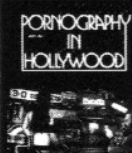
HOT SUMMER IN THE CITY '76. Lisa Baker. Black militants abduct & defile lily white virgin. Directed by Gail Palmer.



INCREDIBLE SEX RAY MACHINE '74. Uschi Digard, John Holmes. Mad scientist satisfies perverse cravings. WALL TO WALL SEX!

JOY '75. Sharon Mitchell. Teen nympho causes female rape spree in New York City. HUSTLER's highest rating!

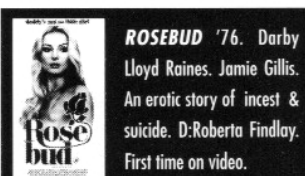
MY TEENAGE DAUGHTER '74. When daddy's little girl became everybody's little girl.



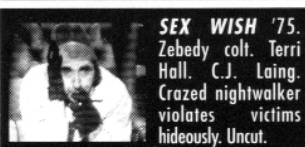
PORNOGRAPHY IN HOLLYWOOD '72. Uschi Digard, Malta. Documents early 70's sex industry. Music by The Spears. D: Carlos Tobalina.

PORNOGRAPHY & PROSTITUTION IN THE ORIENT '73. Documents Asian sex culture. Filmed in Taipei, Hong Kong & Tokyo.

PUNK ROCK '76. Private dick searches for junkie runaway in New York's punk rock scene. Original music by "Elda and the Stilettos". D: Carter Stevens.



ROSEBUD '76. Darby Lloyd Raines, Jamie Gillis. An erotic story of incest & suicide. D: Roberta Findlay. First time on video.



SEX WISH '75. Zebedy colt. Terri Hall, C.J. Laing. Crazed nightwalker violates victims hideously. Uncut.

STORY OF JOANNA '75. Jamie Gillis, Terri Hall, Zebedy Colt. Wealthy libertine shapes sensitive girl into total sex slave. D: Gerard Damiano.



TEENAGE DEVIATE '76. Annie Sprinkle is sex starved runaway addicted to bubble-gum and gang bangs.

TEENAGE SEX KITTEN '74. Rene Bond. Teenagers defiled by demented old hermit!

XXX DOUBLE FEATURE

#9 Big breast superstar Candy Samples stars in THE ELEVATOR and SEX AS YOU LIKE IT. Also starring John Holmes, Sandy Dempsey & Sandy Carey.



XXX DOUBLE FEATURE #28

EVIL WAYS OF LOVE '72. Early Gerard Damiano production. SWEET & SOUR '73. Jamie Gillis, Cindy West. New York sex slayer punishes busty women.

1970's SOFT X SINEMA



GREAT HOLLYWOOD RAPE SLAUGHTER '71. Frustrated filmmaker goes on bloody shotgun rampage. First time on video.

JOHN HOLMES AND THE ALL STAR SEX QUEENS '80. John Holmes screws Candy Samples, Uschi Digard, Kitten Natividad & Kelli Stewart. **LINDA LOVELACE FOR PRESIDENT '76.** The original XXX superstar in silly sex comedy.



MISTY 1975. Rebecca Brooke, Jennifer Welles, Chris Jordan. Intelligent eroticism. by Joe Sarno. 1st time on video.

PANORAMA BLUE '74. Rene Bond, Uschi Digard, John Holmes. Color sex-travaganza!

PRETTY WET LIPS '74. Bridgette Maier. Buster & Chickie violate schoolgirl hitchhiker & suburban wives. First time on video.



PERMISSIVE '72. Teen girl becomes mixed up in London "groupie scene". Original music by Forever More, Comus, and Titus Groan.



ROAD OF DEATH '73. Carol Connors. Gang of bikers rape busty blonde chicks. Original music by The Joe Banana Thing. First time on video.

SADDLE TRAMP WOMEN '72. Candy Samples, Rene Bond. Harlots in fine garters service gang raping outlaws. Beautiful color.



SAPPHO DARLING '69. The highly sensual, busty Yvonne D'Angers radiates sweet love in sensitive story of lesbianism. From Sweden.

TARZ & JANE & BOY & CHEETAH '75. Georgina Spelvin. Tarz has his dork bitten off by a crocodile, Cheetah sticks his "Throbbing Pink" into Jane's "Keyster" & much more happens in hilarious Tarzan spoof. First time on video.



SOFTCORE D.F. #4 THE LAST STEP DOWN '71. Uschi Digard, Malta. Busty hookers initiate virgin into world of prostitution. **SPREAD IT AROUND '70.** Malta. Busty blonde learns all about swinger's lifestyle.

SOFTCORE DOUBLE FEATURE #7 Busty superstar Ushi Digard stars in **SKIN FLICK MADNESS '71** & **THE MAGIC MIRROR '70.**



SOFTCORE D.F. #8 JANIE '70. Sadistic teenager leaves bloody trail of hacked-up bodies in her sexual pursuit of "Daddy". D: Roberta Findlay. Also includes the Findlay's TAKE MY HEAD '71.

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Yes, it's another (on-schedule) edition of SHOCK CINEMA, once again covering everything under the sun—from Peter Greenaway, to Jerry Lewis, to '70s porn. Where else can you find *that* combo? Of course, things are ever-changing here in SC-land, as I try to bring the most bizarre niches of cinema onto your coffee table, TV-tray, or toilet tank. Once again, I'm spewing my opinions on old and new releases, plus there's loads of underground fare after my visit to this year's New York Underground Film Festival. We also have a kick-ass article from Travis Crawford, highlighting some of the best films you'll probably never have the chance to see; Tavis Riker continues his Sharp Relief column, which tackles the wide world of music videos; and several new Film Flotsam contributors join the ranks of the terminally obsessed.

SUBSCRIPTIONS / BACK ISSUES: Single issues are \$5 apiece (with checks/money orders made payable to Steve Puchalski) and a three-issue subscription is still only 12 lousy bucks. As usual, subscribers can keep track of when to renew by checking the upper right corner of their mailing label, which lists the last issue they'll be receiving...For overseas readers, single issues are \$8 apiece (due to the outrageous postage costs)...Concerning my rapidly-diminishing back issues: #6 and 7 are \$4 apiece, while the new 'n' improved #8 - 10 are the usual \$5 each...In other news, I was glad to learn that my collection of old reviews, SLIMETIME: A GUIDE TO SLEAZY, MIND-LESS MOVIE ENTERTAINMENT has sold out of its first UK printing. My thanks go out to all of the folks who made it a success.

Moving onto personal matters, it's been a busy six months, folks, trying to supplement my income (and keep myself out of trouble) with various freelance gigs, which include feature articles in FANGORIA (covering legitimately cool flicks such as THE KILLER CONDOM and HABIT), manning the video column in the fan-ish SCI-FI ENTERTAINMENT, plus assorted reviews in ASIAN CULT CINEMA, EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA, BLACKEST HEART MAGAZINE, as well as my first contributions to Cinebook's illustrious MOTION PICTURE GUIDE. Phew! To put it mildly, I'm fuckin' exhausted! And after this summer, the chair in front of my computer has a permanent indentation of my sorry, drunken ass. I feel like I've barely left my skanky apartment for the last three months--but seeing how rank and disgusting the streets of Manhattan get this time of year, that's probably all for the best.

SHOCK CINEMA has been around for so long (nearly a decade? God, I feel old...), I often assume that anyone who's heard of it knows exactly what type of mag they're getting. Occasionally, I'm reminded otherwise, such as when I recently received a very pissed-off letter from a self-proclaimed "up-and-coming filmmaker" (Warning! Over-Inflated Ego!). Several months earlier, he had sent me a short film of his. I watched it, was *not* impressed, and later gave it a negative (but polite...especially for me) mention in the previous issue. Well, lemme tell you, this guy was livid that I *dared* to give his epic a less than awe-struck review—especially since WORLD OFFANDOM magazine had already raved about it (of course, that public relations rag also called HELLRAISER 4 and EVENT HORIZON modern masterworks). Sorry, but unlike pro-level mags, I'm not obliged to lick the bunglehole of every filmmaker who gives me a free tape. In fact, I didn't even ask this guy for his movie! As I suggested to him, in the future he should include a disclaimer: "If you don't adore my film, please don't mention it at all." That way, he won't have a hissy fit every time someone pans it. In addition, he should avoid any *real* audiences (i.e. not family and friends), since there's a distinct possibility they won't think he's the hottest

commodity since Dario Argento...I know firsthand about harsh criticism (since SC has gotten its fair share over the years), but if you're going to do *anything* creative in your life, you've got to expect it and be able to deal with it. Even better, maybe you can actually *learn* something in the process...If nothing else, try not to whine so loudly when it (inevitably) occurs.

For the record, I try to locate some of the most obscure movies of every possible genre. But more important, I hope to make the reviews informative, humorous, and try to be totally honest (unlike most shit-stain rags). So even if you don't agree with my opinion on a film (or aren't even interested in the thing), you can hopefully get a few laughs from the review itself. And what type of credentials do I have to be pumping out this mag? HA! None whatsoever, just like most of today's reviewers. I'm just another longtime movie fanatic with an opinion...I barely even went to the theatre when I was a kid. Instead, I spent my adolescence sucking at that glass teat. Outside of the occasional Disney movie, I only remember actively begging to see three films during my single-digit years: The Adam West-BATMAN flick, YELLOW SUBMARINE, and 2001 (which confused my dad more than it did me). With that combo of influences, it's no wonder my cinematic brainpan is so soft 'n' runny nowadays...Of course, after sitting through every movie I could during the '70s, I spent my college years at Syracuse University (1) drunk, (2) squeaking through a (still-unused) Mechanical Engineering degree, and (3) running the campus film series. During that time, I got to choose 'n' watch every type of film under the sun (in addition to learning what other equally brain-fried folks enjoyed)—from mainstream swill, to foreign oddities (since no legit theatre in the area would risk financial ruin with pics like RADIO ON), to all-night festivals that ranged from 17 straight hours of Patrick McGooohan's THE PRISONER, to cult showcases that included big-screen showings of HEAD and SPIDER BABY. It was in the mid-'80s that I began SLIMETIME, a sickly-green newsletter which reviewed many of these faves; and while originally planned as a simple hand-out at film screenings (something to keep folks amused as they waited for the next screening of CALIGULA), it soon grew out of control. And in a town as bereft for news as Syracuse, I actually wound up as a front-page, entertainment-section article in the local paper! But after (1) getting ratted out and fired from my job for misusing their Xerox machine; (2) seeing the ex-friend who ratted me out convicted for the shotgun-murder of an ex-cop; and (3) simply getting sick of that gray-skied, blue-collar cesspool—I decided Central NY was *not* the place I wanted to call home. So in 1990, I wound up in NYC, where I (slowly) published SHOCK CINEMA. Meanwhile, for my day job, I did the buying for Kim's Video, at their lovably grubby old location on the corner of St. Marks and 2nd Avenue. This, of course, gave me even more insight into the fringe-public's viewing habits, including seeing Peter Weller renting a German fetish-porno entitled "Pissy Teeny"; an obviously-coked-out Anthony Michael Hall (at nine in the morning) disappointed that we didn't stock any of his shiny early-'90s pics; and people of all shapes and sizes indulging in the latest, cutting-edge deviance. Ah, the fond memories. But (thankfully), that's all two full years in the past. Nowadays, I'm simply sitting here in front of this cornea-throbbing monitor, paying the rent from the various writing gigs mentioned above, as well as the mag you hold in your sweaty hands...The bottom line? I know what I like, I *think* I know what people with my sense of derangement might enjoy, and (after the amount of Bushmills I've ingested tonight) I'm not in the mood to deal with any more bullshit. So bring on the films, and watch out for any low-flying debris...Most of all, enjoy. 9/15/97

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All half-baked criticism and abusive rants written by Steve Puchalski, unless otherwise noted.

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ORPHANS OF THE MEDIA GATEKEEPERS

by Travis Crawford

For anyone who attends film festivals and/or maintains an interest in world cinema that extends further than the drivel that the verbose narrator of those Godawful Miramax trailers spoon-feeds you, it's difficult to look at the movie listings for "specialty" theatres like the Angelika, or its equivalent the Ritz here in nearby Philadelphia, without feeling like something has gone seriously wrong. If the utopian ideal of art-film distribution is that it exists to provide adventurous and unconventional fare to a cinematically open-minded audience, then, boy, did we take a wrong turn somewhere around the Sundance/SEX, LIES & VIDEO-TAPE bend. Urban specialty-theatres are now typically multiplexes that, by and large, serve up a parallel-exhibition equivalent to the same form of generic and predictable dross packing 'em in at suburban mallplexes across the land, with the critical difference being that the twentysomething, mini-backpack toting, platform-shoe-stomping urban hepstress gets to sit in the theatre's cafe and slurp down overpriced espresso before going in to see wretched offal like WELCOME TO THE DOLLHOUSE and CITIZEN RUTH, enabling her to feel culturally superior to her 13-year-old sister stuck back in Hicksville standing in line for a ticket to the newest Chris Farley opus. The days of arthouses existing as a truly alternative venue for experimental cinema seem to be in rapid decline, as most of the independent features that fill these specialty theatres are often significantly less innovative than the stuff major studios were releasing twenty-five years ago. Dull swill like LA HAINE and THE USUAL SUSPECTS are capable of garnering raves in their platform releases (what exactly is a film like USUAL SUSPECTS supposed to be an alternative to?) while the most recent works by heavyweights like Antonioni, Resnais, Rivette, and Herzog are incapable of obtaining any American distribution, and the entire careers of brilliant directors like Edward Yang and Bela Tarr exist in North American cinemas only on the festival circuit (for more on this depressing dilemma, track down Michael Atkinson's "To Market, To Market" article in the 11/19/96 Village Voice, or Jonathan Rosenbaum's piece "The World According to Harvey and Bob" reprinted in his anthology MOVIES AS POLITICS). And while I'm happy for Manhattan residents that they have the opportunity to see such remarkable films as IRMA VEP, UNDERGROUND, ULYSSES GAZE, and WRONY (CROWS), those four barely traveled to anywhere else in the country; unspooling for a week or two at Film Forum or Anthology Film Archives is suitable for New Yorkers, but it doesn't exactly constitute a "release."

So at whom should we point the finger? It's easy to gripe about the Miramaxification of the American alternative cinema circuit (believe me, I do it every chance I get), but it's a much more sobering reality to require an entire younger generation of filmgoers to examine their own viewing habits. Think about this: the last four titles I can recall that were truly daring and radical in their experimentation with form and content, and that received a reasonably generous theatrical release, were DEADMAN, CRASH, LOST HIGHWAY, and TEMPTRESS MOON. All four bombed, even on the level of limited platform release performance expectations. It's a grim reality that Carl Dreyer could imitate his own film ORDET by rising like Lazarus and directing the masterpiece of his career, and it would stand an infinitely smaller chance of being granted a specialty-theatre release than a black comedy about a

pack of Riot Grrrls who decide to rob a bank, toplining, say, Drew Barrymore and one of the Baldwin brothers, and directed by a 22-year-old kid with a nose ring and a cell phone. It's also a grim reality that my entire generation of culturally lethargic, cinematically-illiterate media-whores would do well to assume a bit of responsibility for. The next time you plop down seven or eight bucks to sit through a Gregg Araki or Abel Ferrara film, smugly patting yourself on the back for supporting "independent" cinema, just remember that every generation gets the art it deserves.

While some worthwhile recent titles that fall through the theatrical distribution cracks at least manage to eke out a secondary existence via the video underground—Wong Kar-wai's FALLEN ANGELS and Peter Greenaway's THE BABY OF MACON on the basis of their directors' cult followings, Ole Bornedal's Danish thriller NIGHTWATCH on the anticipation surrounding the same director's own big-budget American remake—the following excellent films, all screened at various film festivals (particularly Toronto), have yet to have the same luck. They are ten that got away...

1.) 1000 ROSES (Netherlands; 1994). Dutch theatre director Theu Boermans' debut film is a truly unnerving piece of work that begins as dysfunctional family melodrama and climaxes as gory Gothic horror. Initially a low-key albeit tense study of the toxic relationship between a middle-aged woman and her daughter who manages the family gardening business, Gustav Ernst's script goes for baroque before the final reel, as an American investment firm takes control of the sleepy industrial town where the family resides, just as a mysterious terminal illness begins to destroy its population. Violence and insanity spread throughout the family like a cancer before Boermans steers the film to its stunningly grim conclusion (power tools are involved; nuff said?), and the strength of 1000 ROSES is its unflinching willingness to guide the material to its most logical, and bitter, closure. As a satiric attack on capitalism, it's also one of the few films I can recall of late that successfully gives its subtextual metaphor an organic human quality (making it a better film, I would then venture, than CRASH).

2.) MOONLIGHT BOY (Taiwan; 1993). This ethereal, meditative ghost story left a haunting impression on me more like a dimly recalled dream than a movie, and as such, it's almost indescribably strange—indescribable because its strangeness is so restrained and quiet, it's difficult to get a grasp on its odd power. Director Yu Wei Yen co-produced Edward Yang's 4-hour masterpiece BRIGHTER SUMMER DAY (another great film unreleased in this country), and he must have picked up from Yang a skill for reflective, acutely observational filmmaking in this tale of a comatose young boy whose spirit wanders the streets at night, searching for his family and silently affecting earthbound souls with whom he comes into contact. Eerie yet touching, Yu's film reminded me of such other poetic supernatural films as CARNIVAL OF SOULS and LET'S SCARE JESSICA TO DEATH, or even the recent Hong Kong chiller THE RETURNING, whilst also seeming wholly original. Even the decidedly low-tech special effects managed to add to its ragged charm.

3.) REBELS OF THE NEON GOD (Taiwan; 1993). And while on the subject of great Taiwanese cinema of

1993... Director Tsai Ming-liang is perhaps the most widely-acclaimed filmmaker on this list, primarily for the two films he has done since this debut work, the Venice prize-winner VIVE L'AMOUR (1994, and actually available on American video, astonishingly enough), and his brand-new Berlin-winner THE RIVER. However, I still don't think he has surpassed REBELS, which remains his most vibrant and evocative effort to date. Chronicling an alienated teenage boy's obsession with a local hoodlum—most certainly sexual, although the boy doesn't fully comprehend this, and Tsai himself wouldn't bring the homoerotic undercurrent to the surface until VIVE L'AMOUR—and, in the process, making Taipei look so scummy that Mexico City and Bangkok seem like rural Scotland in comparison, Tsai's masterful first film captures the seductive frenzy of adolescent sexual obsession perfectly. I also think one reason why Tsai's work verges on reaching a wider audience is that his Euro-artfilm-styled navel-gazing existentialism is always tempered by a razor-sharp deadpan wit.

4.) TROP DE BONHEUR (France; 1994). This surprisingly engrossing second film from young director Cedric Kahn expertly meshes hand-held-lensed Cassavettes-styled actor improv with the type of stereotypically French examinations of the behavioral minutia of beautiful young people that American cineastes have come to know and love about the French (see ROHMER, Eric), so why it's so unknown outside of its home country, I can't fathom. Perhaps it's because the kids in Kahn's picture are not bourgeois Aryans on holiday, but troubled, multicultural lower-income adolescents toying with vo-tech degrees and getting wasted. But unlike the condescending portrayal of this neglected youth subculture in such American efforts as KIDS and SUBURBIA, you actually like the ragtag pack of friends in TROP DE BONHEUR, making it a sort of Gallic, sexually-charged DAZED AND CONFUSED. Kahn's energetic little movie doesn't exactly reinvent the wheel, but it deserves a look.

5.) BOMBAY (India; 1995). After the Americanization of Hong Kong action cinema, the Indian musical is often considered to be the next potential foreign film frontier ready to be capitalized upon and spit out by the American media machine, the only drawback being that—to those accustomed to John Woo's Westernized Smith and Wesson homoeroticism—the foreign film spectacle of three-hour melodramas about the power of Allah, with huge musical numbers that feature subtitled lines like "Your bosoms inspire the world's procreation" (from ROJA), might be a little...well, too foreign. Still, the recent theatrical and video release of the incredible epic GOD IS MY WITNESS introduced American filmgoers to the mind-boggling world of Hindustan choreography and melodrama so overripe it makes Douglas Sirk look like Robert Bresson, but for my money, the more recent musical BOMBAY is even better (quite an achievement!). Mani Rathnam is one of the most accomplished directors of popular Indian cinema, and this is his best work to date—a breathtaking saga of a family's love threatened by Hindu and Muslim religious conflicts, and the resulting January 1993 riots in Bombay. But if that causes you to anticipate a dry exercise in historio-polemical cinema, think again, since this religious conflict is conveyed primarily through MUSICAL NUMBERS and SLAPSTICK COMEDY! What's remarkable, though, is how this

populist entertainment treatment in no way detracts from the seriousness of the message at hand, but only presents it that much more effectively. BOMBAY then stands as one of the rare films that actually does completely fulfill the cliché of why one attends the movies: you *do* laugh, you *do* cry, and it *does* make you think—and you get some of the most incredible musical numbers in the history of world cinema as a nice bonus! In other words, BOMBAY pretty much *defines* cinema, and although I realize Americans are basically by nature racist ethnocentric pigs, if this thing doesn't get some kind of wider exposure in this country—video or theatrical—something is seriously wrong indeed.

6.) STEFANIE'S PRESENT (Switzerland; 1996). "Death as Joyous Freedom!" shrieks the tag-line on the press-kit, and that tone of morbid glee sums up this perverse hour-long oddity surprisingly well. Director Mathieu Seiler was only 22 years old when he completed this first (semi-) feature-length film, and although it does sporadically suffer from a certain amateurish film-school naiveté, it also demonstrates an enjoyably adolescent, unapologetically florid nihilism that I suspect most older filmmakers would be reluctant to flaunt. The prospect of witnessing the last three days in the life on a 12-year-old girl as she skips school, loses her virginity, wears too much eye makeup, then commits suicide, must sound dauntingly grim to most viewers, but Seiler's film insidiously gets under your skin by forcing you to see the world through Stefanie's eyes—and in this he is well served by the confident performance of young Soraya Da Mota, a Swiss Christina Ricci. Stephane Kuthy's luminous black-and-white cinematography and a wickedly dark, grotesquely juvenile sense of humor also draw one into Stefanie's rebellion against the stifling banality of her quiet Swiss suburb, making her final act of ultimate defiance seem surprisingly credible—the understandable inevitability of her suicide turns out to be the film's most shocking achievement. Finally, during this film's Toronto fest screening, in the midst of a dream sequence wherein Stefanie imagines two old men are forcing her to perform oral sex on a pacifier, an elderly woman sitting behind me screamed out "Sick, sick, sick!" and groaned in disgust. I mean, really, can you think of a higher recommendation?

7.) LA BOUCHE DE JEAN-PIERRE (France; 1996). Deeming STEFANIE'S too brief to fill a feature slot, the Toronto fest organizers booked it with a second film—and would you believe they found another depressing hour-long European film about an adolescent girl's first sexual experiences and attempts at suicide? However, Seiler's film couldn't be more different in stylistic approach than this mini-masterpiece from director-writer-editor Lucile Hadzihalilovic: whereas Seiler reveled in pubescent angst by so strongly identifying with his protagonist, Hadzihalilovic dissects her dysfunctional family with the cold, clinical precision of a surgeon. Shot in a unique 16mm widescreen-Cinemascope process by the director's husband Gaspar Noe, and bathed in a sickly-green fluorescent haze, LA BOUCHE is like an Afterschool Special helmed by Cronenberg or David Fincher, with a heroine so glum she makes the eponymous figure of Bresson's MOUCHETTE look like Alicia Silverstone. When little Mimi's mother tries to kill herself, Mimi is sent to live with her aunt in the most oppressive housing project I've ever seen, but when the aunt's boyfriend—the Jean-Pierre of the title—molests Mimi, she too attempts suicide, winding up in the hospital with her mother. LA BOUCHE is an unremittingly harrowing, almost traumatically disturbing, little film, and an impossible one to recommend to a casual reviewer. Yet its willingness to expose the raw cruelty and sheer, jaundiced ugliness of

this child's world, and to depict it with neither lurid sensationalism nor cloying sentimentality, marks it as a considerable achievement, and admittedly a better film than its worthy Toronto double-bill partner. Tough going, but worth it—and I'd venture a guess that if Hadzihalilovic and Noe ever make a feature-length follow-up, they'll be a major talent to reckon with.

8.) TWILIGHT (Hungary; 1990). Although I consider cinematographer-turned-director Gyorgy Feher's debut film to be easily one of the best motion pictures so far this decade, it has received little support, even within the film fest circuit, and I would imagine that's due to the film's somnambulist pacing, which makes even the most self-indulgent Tarkovsky feel like Tsui Hark by comparison. But for the more contemplative viewer not handicapped by ADD, TWILIGHT is remarkable viewing—an eerie, hypnotic masterpiece that rivals such greats as LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD, THE SEVENTH VICTIM, and Argento's INFERNO in its otherworldly ability to not only depict a narrative mystery, but to construct a formal approach so perfectly enigmatic that everything in the film's enclosed universe becomes shrouded in mystery as well. The archetypal plot—world-weary middle-aged police detective investigates a series of child murders in the forests of rural Hungary—actually remains secondary to the creepy, ethereal tone Feher expertly establishes with his long, slow tracking shots of the landscape, accompanied by haunting Russian choral music. Although the sequences involving the music choreographed with Miklos Gurban's seductive black-and-white cinematography are somewhat reminiscent of Herzog's HEART OF GLASS, and there are certain structural affinities Feher's film shares with those of his countryman Bela Tarr (no coincidence, this, as Tarr was involved with TWILIGHT's production, and Feher himself later co-produced Tarr's seven-hour-plus opus SATAN-TANGO), TWILIGHT is truly *sui generis*—a richly textured and visionary piece of pure cinema with an aesthetic and formalist rigor rarely glimpsed in an increasingly stagnant and homogenous current world cinema climate.

9.) STONE (Russia; 1991). If Feher makes Tarkovsky look like Tsui, then STONE's director Aleksandr Sokurov makes Feher look like Shinya (TETSUO) Tsukamoto. "One of the least compromising filmmakers in the world," J. Hoberman recently wrote of Sokurov, and I don't imagine the NY Film Fest audience with whom I saw this film would argue: after the opening ten or fifteen minutes, a continuous mass exodus kept the doors of Alice Tully Hall perpetually ajar throughout the remainder of the running time, until well over half of the original crowd had departed before the film's close, an even greater walk-out figure than that of a showing of CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST I once attended. So what does that prove? That Sokurov is a genius, and that most New Yorkers are pretentious philistines, of course! There are those who have argued that the admittedly demanding films of Sokurov—unlike every other filmmaker on this list except for Rathnam, Sokurov is already responsible for a rather sizeable body of work—are barely cinema at all, but merely a montage of beautiful still-life photographic images masquerading as a film; like his spiritual predecessor Tarkovsky, Sokurov has also been accused of being a willfully obscure mystic unable—or unwilling—to communicate his hermetic private visions to the outside world. I would instead proffer Sokurov as being one of contemporary cinema's true visionaries, a mesmerizing talent whose dreamlike, meditative films are like transmissions from another world, signals which we are not yet prepared to fully comprehend—he stands with Sogo Ishii and Wong Kar-wai as being one of the

few truly 21st-century filmmakers. STONE chronicles the relationship between an old man and his young caretaker at a cabin in the dead of winter, but its concerns are principally non-narrative, the long takes (and I mean *long*) and mesmeric black-and-white cinematography (again!) luring the viewer into a narcotic trance or fugue state, whilst Sokurov's startling experimentation with form cause one to continually reevaluate even the simplest perceptions of the film (even more amusing than the Lincoln Center mass bailing, was the NY Times review of the fest screening, which interpreted Sokurov's radical manipulation of anamorphic lenses as being a symptom of faulty projection; one wonders if Canby ran to the lobby and complained during SECONDS and CROOKLYN). I understand that Sokurov's spellbinding films (I gather two of his more recent efforts—WHISPERING PAGES and MOTHER AND SON—are even more accomplished, but I have yet to have the opportunity to see them) could never get released in this country. I also understand that this is an incredible loss.

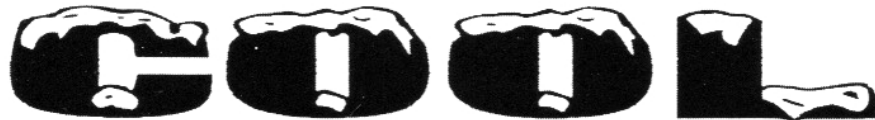
10.) METAL SKIN (Australia; 1994). If it's completely fathomable why STONE could never see the light of a projector in this country, it's also a complete mystery to me why this film has never been granted a specialty-theatre release on our shores. A slick, English-language, widescreen action-oriented youth drama from the director of the acclaimed ROMPER STOMPER, the astounding METAL SKIN has already developed a fervent cult following in North America solely on the basis of pirated video copies, but this masterwork of sensory-overload should be experienced on the big screen for maximum impact. And why most of us haven't had the opportunity to do so is baffling to me—particularly since the film reportedly tanked upon its belated Australian release, which would cause me to believe the production company would be quite eager to make its investment back by selling it to the first Yank bidder. Perhaps the problem, as with several of the other films on this list, is an issue of cinematic style and aesthetics foregrounded at the alleged expense of "content"—Americans seem to prefer their narrative straight-up, easy-to-digest, no-frills, thank-you-very-much, and, as with TWILIGHT, METAL SKIN utilizes a seemingly banal, superficial storyline as raw material for stylistic fragmentation. Set among the amateur car-racing underground of lower-income Melbourne, writer-director Geoffrey Wright's film drives its tale of the betrayed love between four teenagers through a hallucinatory kaleidoscope that recalls the best work of Roeg, Cammell, and, well, Russ Meyer. But editors Bill Murphy and Jane Usher's turbo-drive cutting rhythm is light years ahead of the pointless jack-hammer technique of such detritus as THE ROCK and NATURAL BORN KILLERS, in that Wright integrates it into the conceptual framework of the overall film, commenting on the increasingly frantic downward spiral of emotional turmoil destroying these kids, as well as their fetishization of cars as their mechanical salvation in life. Superior in similar thematic ways to both the aforementioned Stone film and CRASH, METAL SKIN is brutal and excessive—but also thoroughly fascinating and compulsively watchable (repeatedly), not to mention one of the only films I've ever viewed wherein a car chase is actually a satisfying climax. Probably considered too grim and too violent—or maybe just too *much*—for American release, the chances of that exposure eventually occurring might just have been increased by Wright's recent signing with Universal and Antonio Banderas (!) to direct a big-budget American science-fiction film entitled THE SPARROW. Here's hoping (no doubt futilely) that Wright is one of the few foreign directors who are able to retain their integrity upon entering the confederacy of whores. Ω



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FILM REVIEWS

THEY CALL HER ONE EYE [a.k.a. Thriller—A Cruel Story] (Shocking Videos; 1972).

Originally double-billed in US grindhouses back in 1974 with DIRTY O'NEILL (a sexploitation DIRTY HARRY knock-off, co-directed by Lewis Teague), this once-illusivive chunk of Deuce history is now making the rounds thanks to an uncut, Swedish print (sans subtitles). Of course, with a film *this* tawdry, who needs a translation? Plus, it's 15 minutes longer than the American release, thanks to additional bare flesh and hardcore close-ups (which look suspiciously like inserts). Bluntly directed by Bo A. Vibenius (who, in the US print, used the pseudonym Alex Fridolinski), the drawing card of this sex 'n' revenge flick is its starring turn by the waif-like Christina Lindberg (best known for her work in Joe Sarno's YOUNG PLAYTHINGS). She's sexy, demure, and though usually quite expressive, in this endeavor, her character remains passively traumatized throughout.

In the intro, we see a sweet young child named Frigga innocently playing with some bearded old sicko who eventually rapes her---complete with a POV shot of this old fuck sweating and shaking as he cums (which I could've done without). Years later, she grows into the lovely Ms. Lindberg, who has been mute ever since the incident (which means even less of a need for subtitles).

An innocent young lass, she jumps into the first car to come along when she misses her bus, even though it's driven by a Swedish Casanova-wannabee. Then, after a pricey dinner and several (dozen) drinks, it's back to his pad, where Frigga is drugged, beaten and turned into an addict. Sure enough, this WalMart Romeo (Heinz Hopf) is a pimp, and turns the fresh-faced Frigga into his latest unwilling trollop. When she refuses a client, he stabs a knife into her left eye (in gruesome close-up, no less), and thus explains the US title.

After that, she deals with a series of deviant old farts—stripping down, shooting up, and equipped with her ever-fashionable eye-patch (which is color-coordinated to match her wardrobe!). Finally, she makes it back to her farm home, only to discover that her parents have just died. Damn, this gal has shitty timing...But just wait, because in her non-mattress spare time, Frigga takes a martial arts course and learns to shoot, with all hell breaking loose in the final half-hour, when she saws off a shotgun and plugs big, slo-mo holes in her bosses and takes righteous revenge on her pimp! Wow! What a woman!

While I wish it was directed with more vigor, this import certainly has all the requisite sex, violence and redemption you could ask for. Even better, Lindberg is nude throughout, and plays a mute, vengeful heroine who pre-dates Zöe Tamerlis in MS. 45 by nearly a decade. She also cuts quite a fashionable figure, roaming about in her duster 'n' shotgun ensemble. No question, this is a classic of its ilk. A film so crude and cool that I'm surprised Tarantino hasn't jumped on this epic and double-billed it with SWITCHBLADE SISTERS.

VIGILANTE FORCE (1976).

This United Artists release frequently turns up on Late Night TV, looking like just another WALKING TALL wannabee. But don't let the red, white and blue title fool you, because this twisted flick has more on its mind than simple, good-ol'-boy exploitation. Sure, the script is swaddled in the typical

vigilante formula, it also has a fine sense of subversive white trashiness, thanks to writer-director George Armitage (who later helmed the fabulous MIAMI BLUES and GROSSE POINTE BLANK).

Welcome to Elk Hills, a typical blue collar town which comes with an introductory montage of hardhats, drinking, gambling, whoring, and even torching a police car. Sure, this town used to be a peaceable rural shithole (think Mayberry RFD, as in, Really Fucking Dull), but once the oil company reopens, the place is swarming with lawless scum. Then we meet Jan-Michael Vincent (before turning into a puffy-faced Poster Child for Chemical Dependency) as the widowed resident, Ben.

In response to the rise in crime, the town's governing old farts (including mayor Brad Dexter) increase the police force by hiring on Ben's wise-ass brother Aaron (Kris Kristofferson) and his team of Nam-vet buddies. From his macho swagger and shit-eating grin, you know that Aaron enjoys beating up the rowdy locals a bit *too* much, and he soon begins stockpiling heavy armaments and cutting deals with the local illegit casino. To be honest, I kind of liked the power-hungry sleazebag, especially when he strong-arms the greasy bank president (David Doyle) for a 10G "loan" (besides, is killing CHARLEY'S ANGELS' Bosley *really* a crime?). Unfortunately, all of this amoral fun has to end sometime, and party-pooper brother Ben has to do it.

Although Jan-Michael has a semblance of nice-guy charm, Kris is the *real* deal, and even gets to turn psycho during the big 4th of July coup (with Kris and his boys armed with semi-automatics, and wearing MUSIC MAN-style outfits!). In addition, there's Victoria Principal as Ben's dumb-ass girlfriend, who he courts with a six-pack of Pabst Blue Ribbon (now *there's* a date!) and looks like she just stepped out of an episode of B.J. AND THE BEAR. In addition, Bernadette Peters isn't bad as an off-key-singer/whore who winds up as Aaron's squeeze, Andrew Stevens plays Vincent's tractor-shop assistant, and Dick Miller cameos as a (terrible) barroom piano player.

Though increasingly obvious, how can you *not* like a film in which every authority figure is spineless, and Victoria Principal gets shot in the back? This is the perfect type of drive-in treat you want to watch at three in the morning, after downing a trough full of beer.

CHAPPAQUA (Fox Lorber; 1967).

I've been hearing stories about this film for years—but never managed to dredge up a copy, even in bootleg form. That is, until now. And even if home video isn't the best medium to experience this trip-fest, it's better than nothing, since the odds of a big screen showing are about the same as Joel Schumaker directing a good movie.

Based on 32-year-old, writer-director Conrad Rooks' own drug experiences, this sucks the unwary viewer into the Inner Journey of Russel Harwick, who went from being a teenage alcoholic, to a human wastebasket for whatever drug he could cram up his nose, mouth, or vein. An Inner Journey into what, you ask? Into an often-tedious, totally-tripped-out home movie, with several counter-culture faces interspersed throughout for marquee value.

Shifting between b&w and color, the story begins with nostalgic footage of 42nd Street (back when the Harris was showing a MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. double bill!) and a party featuring plenty of groovy dolls, The Fugs, and 'LSD' spelt out on



the stage in sugar cubes. Our hero, Harwick (played by Rooks), is first seen groveling on that stage; and later turns up around the Central Park Reservoir, chanting with Allen Ginsberg.

Tired of roaming the streets of Manhattan in a daze, Russel staggers into a cab and flies to France, where he checks himself into a drug rehab 'clinique' (run by William S. Burroughs, as Opium Jones). From there on, it's one big dose of artsy hallucinations, as Harwick dries out and tells his history of drug use to a Doc played by Jean-Louis Barrault (CHILDREN OF PARADISE). While sitting in his hospital ward, there are plenty of episodes, like biting a girl while in a Dracula cape, then laying her out on a crap table and eating lunch off of her. When Russel finally gets the right idea and skips out, he stops at a nightclub to see Ornette Coleman (!) perform, winds up a spineless lump on the barroom floor, only to be returned to his clinic bed. In the end, little is solved, and confusion reigns.

Obviously, this was a very personal expression for Rooks (who admitted he made the movie in order to keep himself from diving back into drugs), but that doesn't make it any easier to endure at times, as it bounces from the pretentious, to the naive, to the hysterically half-baked. And once Rooks opens his mouth, you realize the guy is a truly rotten actor. Happily, everything else is a groove. Along the way, director of photography Robert Frank (PULL MY DAISY, COCKSUCKER BLUES) does an outstanding job in the face of total delirium, with good use of super-imposition, spastic camerawork, and bizarre shifts in reality. Ravi Shankar's score also suits it well. But the weirdness is continually undermined with footage of Indian rituals, a black gospel church, or anything else that Rooks deemed cool enough to edit into the stew. When your father is the president of the Avon corporation, you can afford the best, with Rooks blowing his inheritance on this three-and-a-half year, half-a-million-dollar project.

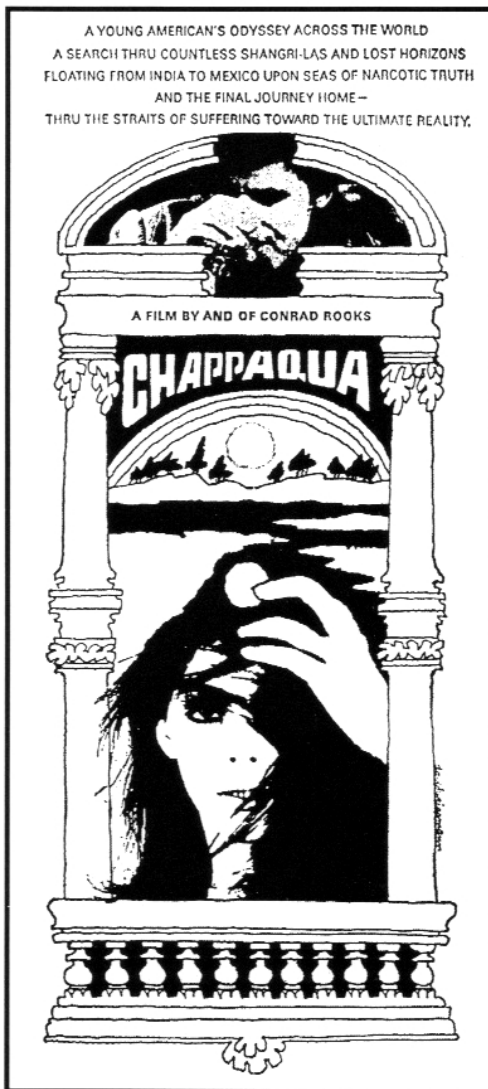
This is an imaginative, riotous indulgence, with a minimum of dialogue and a maximum of annoyance for any straight viewers who accidentally wander into this pic. This thing makes Hopper's THE LAST MOVIE look coherent! It's no surprise that Rooks made only one other feature, based on Hermann Hesse's SIDDHARTHA, which is, reportedly, a much more boring mess. [Note: Chappaqua is a town outside NYC, where Harwick grew up. I'm sure it symbolizes something deep, but in this kinda miasma, does it really matter?]

PIN GODS (1996).

I grew up in a blue collar area that was proliferated with bowling alleys; and back when I was a kid, there was even a local live bowling show telecast every Sunday morning. Even sadder is the fact that I remember watching the damned thing (of course, when you only have three channels, and the other two choices are religious shows, the decision is obvious). And though I was never too good at the game, I definitely enjoyed it—especially once I was old enough to suck down a few cold ones in between frames.

Still, a feature length documentary on the world of pro bowling?!...Well, don't be so quick to pass it up. PIN GODS dares to ask the question, what drives a man to embrace this sport? It tries to answer it by following three newcomers as they try their luck in the big league tournaments, which takes them across the country, from California to Erie, Pennsylvania. There's Tony Rosamilia, a lovable middle-class kid with the girl of a hardcore kegler. Anton "Sonny" Pavelchak is an arrogant hotshot. Meanwhile, Bob Vespi has already tasted the spotlight, during his rookie year, but his mean hook makes him a wild card. He also proudly admits "I'm known for dressing well...On our level."

The film cross-cuts between their very different trajectories, and much of the movie isn't even about actual bowling, but instead, the days in between games, as they're slowly cut from the field. In the end, it takes on a melancholy tinge as dreams are squashed and (difficult to believe) you actually begin to care about these lugs—such as the once-cocky Sonny, who blows out early on and has to deal with his domineering father. More important, these working



class stiff aren't just in it for the fame. They actually need the prize money.

Director Larry Locke, who admits he knew little about bowling beforehand, turns his inexperience into a blessing by observing the people more than the sport. He also manages to whittle a normal, leisurely ten frames into a more rapid-fire two minutes, while cinematographer Scott Pauly takes you right onto the lane itself. Along the way, we visit autographing sessions with (pathetic) fans who have them signing bowling pins; and let's not forget the appearances by Walter Ray Williams, longtime Zeus of the Pin Gods. Fueled by dreams of success, bittersweet twists of fate, and plenty of cool old bowling alleys, this gives the viewer a very real glimpse into a world most would never want to endure.

RASPUTIN, THE MAD MONK and THE REPTILE (Anchor Bay; 1966).

At long last, some of the great Hammer horror classics are making their way to (legit) US home video, complete with widescreen format and original trailers. These two were paired together during their theatrical release, so let's take a look at how they hold up, over three decades later.

The more amusing of the two is RASPUTIN, primarily thanks to Christopher Lee, who took a break from his Dracula fangs in order to play everyone's favorite Russian psycho, and is barely recognizable under that fake hair and beard. If you want historical facts, lemme show you the exit, because this is pure, over-the-top hokum. Still, Lee is outstanding, and he looks like he's having a ball as he heals people on their death bed, guzzles bottle after bottle of wine, and seduces the local lasses in early 20th century Russia. Hell, this guy could drink Bukowski under the table! He's "history's man of mystery" (as the trailer so poetically puts it): A lover, a fighter, and let's not even talk about his dancing! Oh, this hairball is a winner all right, but don't get your hopes up, ladies. Because all he's after is power!

Hitting the big city, Rasputin uses his hypnotic stare to bewitch a lady-in-waiting to the Czarina. She becomes his instant love slave, and even injures the Czar's kid (Oops! He fell!) in order to get Rasputin into the palace, take control of the Czarina's mind, and become the royal family's official Holy Man/Healer. Director Don Sharp (PSYCHOMANIA) keeps this fast-paced and entertainingly idiotic, with overwrought dialogue aplenty, growled by Lee. As usual for Hammer, the production design is outstanding—and a far cry from today's generic-looking (if not downright ugly) genre pics. But this is Lee's showcase all the way. He gets to chop off a guy's hand, toss acid in another's face, and suffers a lovably excessive demise! Ah, they just don't write roles like this anymore...

In comparison, THE REPTILE doesn't hold up nearly as well. Though an occasionally moody chiller, it doesn't pick up speed until the last half-hour, when the title creature makes its appearance. Before then, we spend our time at a small village, whose residents have been dying from "The Black Death," which has them turning green and foaming at the mouth. Of course, viewers who remember the movie's title will be several steps ahead of these rural lunks, who don't notice that all of the corpses have a huge, snake-like bite on the sides of their neck. Where's Quincy when you need him?

When a married couple moves next door to the sinister Dr. Franklyn (Noel Willman) and his lovely daughter Anna (Jacqueline Pearce), they realize there's definitely something odd with their relationship. Such as when Anna grooves away on her sitar, until high-strung dad smashes it to pieces and tosses it in the fireplace. Hmm, I'd suggest laying off the caffeine, pops... Better still, you'd better do something about your daughter, who tends to shed her skin and turn into a scaly-faced, pop-eyed, snake-woman (in a slinky, form-fitted gown, of course), thanks to a secret society in Borneo. Unfortunately, this cool snake-gal doesn't get much screen time, so director John Gilling is forced to stretch the characters to their limits. For comic relief there's John Laurie as a local loony named "Mad Peter", as well as the ubiquitous Michael Ripper as Tom the barkeep. Amusing but forgettable.



TRANS-EUROP-EXPRESS (VSoM; 1967).

Are you in the mood for a four-star blast of arthouse weirdness? Well, you've come to the right place, because this devilishly clever production is as playful with its structure as it is sublimely cinematic. And just in case this sounds too upscale for your tastes, there's also a coating of then-racy S&M to keep the deviant contingent amused. Director-writer Alain Robbe-Grillet is best known as the scripter of Resnais' *LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD*, but before that he was a successful avant-garde novelist, and afterward, directed several

equally odd art flicks, such as *EDEN AND AFTER* and *L'IMMORTELLE*. By far, the gloriously twisted *T-E-EXPRESS* received the widest US release.

Beginning on a train running from Paris to Antwerp, we encounter a cabin full of filmmakers (including Alain R-G himself) discussing the idea of making a movie set on a train—with a vague notion that it should involve cocaine trafficking. It then cuts to Jean-Louis Trintignant, who buys a suitcase with a false bottom, stuffs several powdery white blocks into it, and heads for the train station. But wait, because when he runs into the filmmakers, they recognize Trintignant, consider casting him in their movie, and finally give his character a name—Elias.

The entire script is blessed with similarly self-reflexive turns which betray the usual, linear route of storytelling. And as Elias' adventure thickens, the script purposely incorporates all of the standard EuroSpy trappings, including sinister assassins, various creepy liaisons, and the requisite hot dame. The later is ably provided by Marie-France Pisier (whose later career included everything from artsy hits like *COUSIN, COUSINE* to Tinseltown turds like *THE OTHER SIDE OF MIDNIGHT*), as a sultry prostitute named Eva. She provides most of the film's sex appeal, and that's plenty, especially during a little (now-lightweight) bedpost-bondage with Elias.

All the while, the camera returns to the filmmakers, who continue to discuss the plot of their—or rather, this—movie. They even rethink the storyline as it plays out on screen, and change events when a problem arises. As the line between reality and fiction is stripped away, this becomes a fascinating meditation on the creative process, aided by cinematographer Willy Kurant (whose career has veered from Godard's *MASCULINE FEMI-*

EROTIC? SERIOUS? FUNNY? TRAGIC?
 A MYSTERY? A GAME? A PARADOX?
 NEO-SADISM? A DETECTIVE STORY?



JEAN-LOUIS TRINTIGNANT (star of *A Man and a Woman*); MARIE-FRANCE PISIER-ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET
TRANS-EUROP-EXPRESS
 Written ("Last Year at Marienbad") and Directed by Alain Robbe-Grillet Executive Producer Sanny Halton-Trites by Noelle Gillmor
 A Como Films Production A Trans American Films Release

NINE to Barbara Eden's *HARPER VALLEY P.T.A.*). Methodically paced, to be sure, but there's always a swift sense of humor and a method behind the madness. Beautifully constructed and totally accessible, this brings the arthouse and the grindhouse together into a movie-addict's wet dream.

HOW DID YOU GET IN? WE DIDN'T SEE YOU LEAVE [Par ou t'es Rentré? On t'a pas vue Sortir] (VSoM; 1984).

In search of Video Hell? You're there when you pop this tape into your VCR. Not only is it a Jerry Lewis movie, but it's also one of the two French-lensed vehicles which he starred in during the '80s, and which (justifiably) never stank up US theatres. (The other, *HOLD ME BACK OR I'LL HAVE AN ACCIDENT* co-stars Michel Blanc, and is reportedly the better of the two.) Well, this aging greaseball sure took the money and ran with this turd. It makes his low-grade bumbling in *HARDLY WORKING* look like *SHINE*. On top of that, there's the numbing concept of Jerry dubbed into French, while retaining all of his grossest vocal mannerisms.

First off, the nearly 60-year-old Jerry plays Clovis Blaireau, the bastard love child from a WWII schtupp. Presently, he lives above a French gym for fat chicks (which, when they get shaking, makes his dishes tumble out of the cupboards), and sets up a detective agency that has him following a cheating husband (played by director-writer Philippe Clair). Along the way, hilarity ensues when Jerry gets into an auto accident, and the entire chassis of his car falls off, in pieces! Later, in the middle of posh party, he begin knocking over expensive knick-knacks! Stop! Stop! My sides are aching from uncontrollable laughter!...But seriously, this shit reeks. And it only gets worse.

Soon afterward, Lewis and Clair become pals, hit a disco together ("Boogie!" Jerry hollers), are both accused of attempted murder, and stow-away on a flight to Tunisia (with Jerry accidentally tearing off the stewardess' skirt, for a little Benny Hill-style leering). Taking on fake identities, they're mistaken for Mafia chefs and are pulled into a fast food feud involving Arabian cous-cous, Italian spaghetti, and US hamburgers—with business tycoon Ben Burger hoping to wipe out all of his hideously stereotyped competition.

All of this is so deadening that it borders on the surreal. And no longer the innocent, good-hearted klutz, Jerry seems more like a cackling, certifiable madman. At the very least, you get to see Jerry wandering around a topless pool; catch his Japanese schtick, complete with huge buck teeth; and finally, lead an action-packed finale on Burger's mansion! It's Ram-bozo! Afterward, the survivors are rewarded with outtakes, when they tried to film it in phonetic English. If you're curious, the reason for the Tunisian setting is due to producer Tarak Ben Ammar, who tried to make his homeland desirable by dropping Jerry into the middle of it. Personally, if I was a prospective tourist, that'd be the kiss of death...Barren of laughs, even hardcore Lewis fans will be hard-pressed to sit through this abysmal pic without some type of lower intestinal distress.

THE BIG CUBE (J4HI; 1969).

This amazing chunk of Mexican-lensed trippiness is a lost classic in Acid Claptrap Cinema! Kicking off with groovy credits, it's another blast from the past, chock full of the hideous threads, hip slang, and idiocy which quickly made the late-'60s a joke. But it's also graced with several familiar faces and a rabidly anti-LSD vibe. So prepare to turn on, tune out and laugh your ass off!

An aging Lana Turner (in one of her last starring roles) plays Adriana, a famous stage actress who retires in order to marry wealthy financier Daniel O'Herlihy (currently starring in commercials for Magnavox, accompanied by a beachful of baby turtles). His teen daughter, Lisa (Karin Mossberg), is pissed off by the event, so she joins the local longhairs for an expedition to a trendy nightclub called *The Trip*, featuring "a new show from San Francisco" that has them dropping laced sugar cubes into their beer and blasting off. They also enjoy dosing other's drinks ("I'm gonna cube that mother, but good."). And as we all know, two minutes after taking LSD, your eyes cross, you freak out, you're carted off by cops, and finally run down by a car. Yeah!

Enter George Chakiris (an Oscar-winner for *WEST SIDE STORY*, although you wouldn't know it now) as Johnny Allen, a groovy gigolo who takes a liking to Lisa when he notices how wealthy she is. Of course, in front of the naive Lisa, he acts like the perfect, drug-free gentleman, and she's soon smitten with this dimpled lout. But after her dad is lost at sea and Adriana keeps Lisa's inheritance from her, she and her manipulative fiancé plan their revenge by dosing Adriana with LSD and giving her the *GASLIGHT* treatment.

Soon Turner is carted off to the local loony bin, at which point the tale gets even more frantic and ridiculous, with loads of laughable *Trip Visuals* (which I'm *always* a sucker for). There's even a hippie wedding, with acidheads riding motorcycles into the pool. All in all, it's a spectacular, head-on collision of piss-poor drama and drug-induced subplots, with director Tito Davison taking all of this shit *seriously!* Meanwhile, top-billed Turner is a secondary character for much of the movie. Thank god, because she's terrible.

Unfortunately, there's got to be an anti-drug capper to this drivel, and this one is a doozy! Lisa learns the error of her ways, Adriana regains her psyche by reliving her trauma through a bad play, and (funniest of all) Chakiris winds up living in squalor, addicted to Acid, and babbling to an ant (?). Of course, this type of do-beat ending was supposed to stop kids from ever trying LSD. Instead, films like this were so laughable they're precisely *why* I tried it in the first place! Holy backfire! Co-starring Richard Egan (CHUBASCO) as Adriana's playwright pal and redheaded Pamela Rodgers (a LAUGH-IN regular) as dippy hippie Bibi, this pic is goofy, overwrought, inept, and highly recommended if you're in the appropriate state of chemical enhancement.

TRICK BABY (Shocking Videos; 1973).

This Universal release was dumped into the then-popular blaxploitation niche, but deserved a wider appeal. Based on the novel by Iceberg Slim, this savvy, urban yarn follows the trail of two Philadelphia grifters—one black, the other white—as they display their total lack of scruples, discover plenty of easy marks, and (in the opening sequence) rip off a guy for 10 Grand worth of fake diamonds.

Mel Stuart (best known as Henry Jefferson in ALL IN THE FAMILY) stars as older con man, Blue Howard; while future HILL STREET BLUES cast member Kiel Martin plays White Folks, his half-black, but thoroughly-palefaced partner (as well as the Trick Baby of the title). Like director Larry Yust's later HOMEBODIES, this is essentially a character piece hiding in an exploitation genre. The story has its own laid-back rhythm, as this cool pair pull their cons and avoid the cheesier, sleazier edge of most Times Square fare (though Stuart does display some fine pimp threads at one point).

Thanks to his complexion, Kiel can insinuate himself into White society and set up the cons. On this occasion, things get a little out of hand when he hooks a trio of racist investors in a get-rich-quick scheme involving some (fake) Black-owned real estate. In addition, the heat is on after one of their Mob-connected rubes winds up dead from a heart attack following one of their scams. And if that weren't enough, there's a safety deposit box full of cash which won't be open until the morning, and since everyone in sight is out for revenge, it's gonna be a looong night.

Despite a good relationship between the two leads, their TV-show baggage and its soft storyline makes this feel more like the pilot for a funky series (which would've had '70s network execs struggling for their nitroglycerine tablets). And speaking of television, let's not forget a quick appearance by Ted Lange (THE LOVE BOAT's bartender, Isaac) as one of Blue's pals. With a bluesy score by James Bond and a good feel for urban Philly, this lacks the energy and street-smarts to be a classic, but it is a lightweight, amusing romp that doesn't cop out in the end.

THE AMERICAN DREAMER (1971)

Watching this twisted Dennis Hopper documentary on a double bill with THE LAST MOVIE at Manhattan's Film Forum was pure bliss. The perfect acidhead double bill. And after circling through his work in sewage like WATERWORLD, this helped to remind me why I used to think he was one of the coolest filmmakers on the planet. Sure, his recent career choices (and sobriety) might be lucrative, but it's certainly left the cinema world short one half-baked artist.

Not many public figures would allow themselves to be presented this way for posterity. So I've got to give Hopper credit for having the guts to greenlight this freeform documentary, which follows him to his Taos, New Mexico pad, soon after returning from his lengthy, nasal-membrane-rotting LAST MOVIE shoot in Peru.

Filmmakers L.M. Kit Carson (who went onto script PARIS, TEXAS and TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE PART 2) and Lawrence Schiller (who co-wrote O.J.'s book, "I Want to Tell You") knock on Hopper's front door, Dennis answers it in only a bath towel, and they simply let the guy ramble, as the camera rolls. Bearded and bleary-eyed, he babbles about his lonely, unhappy

childhood; fires off semi-automatic weapons; shares a bathtub with three naked young ladies; and lets loose with some terrifically pretentious insights. The Wit and Wisdom of Dennis Hopper includes such quotables as "I don't believe in reading. By using your eyes and ears you'll find everything there is." Or how about "I'd rather give head to a woman than fuck them... Basically, I think like a lesbian." We also get to watch him strip down in the middle of a suburban street and stroll about, butt naked. Ahh, the man's a fuckin' genius...

No surprise, Hopper looks *very* perplexed while piecing together his footage for THE LAST MOVIE, explaining that editing a movie is like "having a child and cutting its arms off—putting its eyes out." Meanwhile, he's hitting on any pretty young woman within camera range, and suckering a bevy of groupies into a self-declared "sensitivity encounter", with all of them crammed onto his bed and groping Hopper's bare ass. All the while, he puts out these Manson-esque vibes; except instead of killing people, all Dennis did was kill off his own braincells. In a creepy admission, he even boasts of visiting Manson in jail.

There's also a terrible, folksy-ballad soundtrack which captures the era at its most irritating—including lame, Greek Chorus-type tunes about Dennis (complete with rhymes like "Here's to Mr. Hopper / Who traded in his chopper."). Far from your orthodox celebrity profile, Hopper opens wide for the camera and proudly lets loose with a juicy one. I just wonder what he thinks of this pic nowadays.

THE TEENAGE PROSTITUTION RACKET [Storie De Vita E Malavita] (Luminous; 1975).

Director Carlo Lizzani (CRAZY JOE), is the proud auteur behind this jaw-dropping Italian sexploitation, which checks in on several teenage girls and their first experiences with the world's oldest profession. Complete with an Ennio Morricone score, this deviant's delight is sure to keep you amused with its prurient (often hardcore) charms.

It kicks off with one of the sleazier sequences I've had the pleasure to endure, as a mother and her 13-year-old daughter are picked up by a trucker. Once in his cab, Mama asks if he wants to screw her kid ("practically a virgin," she promises), as the girl flashes her bare crotch.

Next up, 16-year-old Rosina (Cinzia Mambretti) comes to the Big City, gets a job making bootleg cassette tapes, and on her first trip to a disco, meets a greaseball named Velvet. After falling for this deadbeat, he begins pimping her in order to pay his overdue rent, pumps her full of pills and kindly sets her up in a bordello (where the skankier whores shoot up in the dining room). Of

course, when she gets sick of her way-too-kinky clientele and tries to escape, Velvet tracks her down and carves up her face!

Then there's Gisella (Christina Moranzoi), another virgin, who's tricked into attending a prostitution party, and the incriminating photos are used as blackmail. Along the way, there's even some hardcore blowjob footage and a little strap-on action... Daniella (Anna Rita Grapputo) is another minx for hire, who seems to "come like a rabbit" but is actually frigid. And when she hears her wealthy dad bragging about the teen prostitutes he frequents, she increases her workload, in order to get back at him.

The 15-year-old Antonietta (Anna Curti) gets tossed out by her family when she's knocked up, runs into the 'wrong sorts' and winds up locked in a loony bin... Another minor, Albertina, screws her johns in public places, like department store changing stalls. While in a convent, she meets man-hating Laura (Lidia Di Corato), who became a whore in order to have control over males for a change. Of course, they fall in love, prompting some lesbo action.

This Milan-based melodrama is drenched in under-age sex, abuse, and various fetishism, while chronicling the heavyhanded travails of a bunch of girls who have to deal with evil fathers, sexist boyfriends, manipulative pimps, and men who act like "cavemen." Capped with brutal deaths and even suicide, there's nearly two full hours of this sludge. Wow! Alternately demeaning and unintentionally hilarious, this is EuroTrash at its most extreme, with lotsa lovely young ladies baring it all in the name of cheapjack thrills.



CHARLOTTE [La Jeune Fille Assassinée] (1974).

In the US, this EuroSlop was advertised like some type of upscale porno flick. Boy, the trenchcoat crowd must've been pissed off by this artsy, French-made snooze-a-rama. Of course, director Roger Vadim is best known for *tres scandalous* projects such as *AND GOD CREATED WOMAN* and *BARBARELLA*. And considering that he's spent his life schtupping international sexpots like Bardot, Deneuve, and (a pre-Ted Turner) Jane Fonda, you'd think that he would've learned something about eroticism in the process. Nope. An episode of *THE GOLDEN GIRLS* is sexier than this dreck.

Vadim begins on the wrong foot by casting himself in the pivotal role of Georges, a famous author who wants to write a book on the murder of a pretty jet setter named Charlotte (Sirpa Lane, best known for Borowczyk's *THE BEAST*), after a pretentious young dimwit named Eric (Mathieu Carriere) nonchalantly admits to causing her death. In addition, there are flashbacks to Georges' own past with Charlotte, and how he deflowered her during her teenage years. (OK, *now* I can understand why bland Vadim would cast himself in this role.)

Along the script's convoluted path, we get Eric's dull confessions of his dealings with Charlotte, and though the young lass is cute (and often nude), she's also an unlikable sort. A willful, needy tease who tosses a necklace into a river, noting that the pearls make the same ripples as vomit. Oh, this gal is a brainiac, all right. Hard to believe, the rest of the supporting snail-eaters are even worse, and you won't give a rat's ass about these clods. Still, they all speak of ditz Charlotte like she was a goddess, just because they got to dip their wick in her.

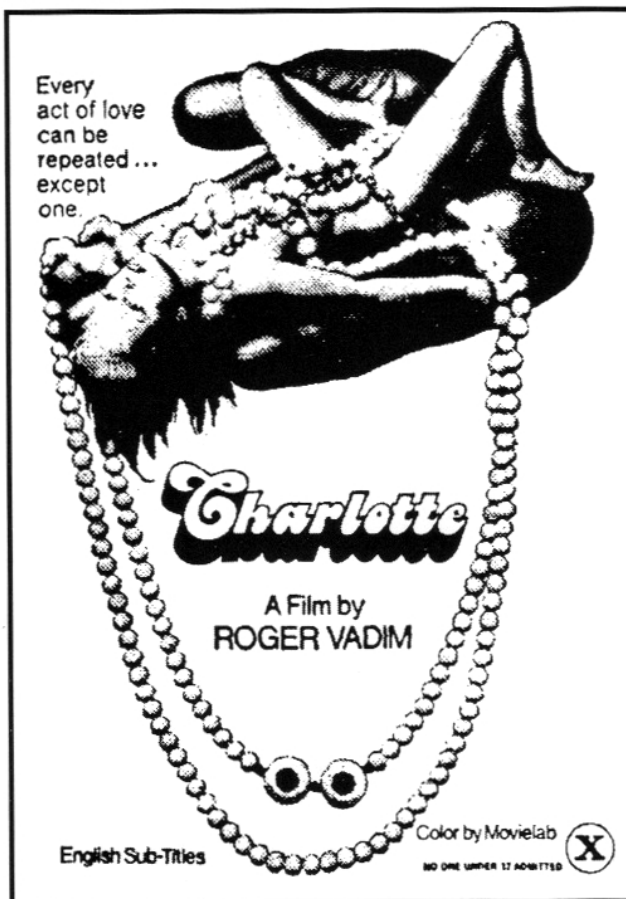
As Georges somnambulistically interviews people in Charlotte's life, we also get increasingly idiotic fragments of her sexual misadventures—from decorating a penis like a Christmas tree, doing a striptease while dressed like a man, and never managing to climax. The punchline? Charlotte finally has an orgasm while being strangled, except it went a little too far. Hell, even back in the mid-'70s, this was a lame idea, and nowadays, it's just a USA Network movie with a little skin.

At least there are a few laughs thanks to a queer film critic (Michel Duchaussoy) who Charlotte marries, and has lines like "I admire this film because it was made *by imbeciles, for imbeciles*." It's almost as if he'd been watching the dailies of this movie. This is all very French, very dull and very fetishistic. Any psychology is puddle-deep, and sex or not, I couldn't wait for this numbing, one-note flick to end. At least the film is well shot by Pierre-William Glenn (*DAY FOR NIGHT*, *STREET OF NO RETURN*), and features a score by Mr. Tubular Bells himself, Mike Oldfield.

THE CABINET OF DR. RAMIREZ (1991).

Peter Sellars is best known as a theatrical director, specializing in new (often controversial) operas or reinterpretations. This oddity was his first foray into cinema (outside of a role in Jean-Luc Godard's loopy *KING LEAR*), and it pegs the Pretentious Meter. According to Sellars, a good-bye to the "spiritual recession" of the '80s, the movie avoids any dialogue, in favor of a wall-to-wall score featuring John Adams' "Harmonielehre Symphony" and Tibetan monks. Despite high anticipation, it tanked at festival screenings, went straight to PBS in '93, and even if you're an arthouse completist, this'll leave you wishing you'd watched *WEEKEND AT BERNIE'S II* instead.

The film begins in a Wall Street stockbroker firm, with co-workers/ex-lovers Peter Gallagher and Joan Cusack going through their daily routine, as each has an emotional breakdown. Then Gallagher and black roommate/co-worker Gregory Wallace go home to their appropriately barren apartment. In equally pointless episodes, a pair of cops take The Company's Boss away in handcuffs, and the homeless Cesar (Mikhail Barishnikov) crawls out of his cardboard crate. Later, a homeless guy shows up, pulls out a shotgun and (in the artiest way possible) blows away Gallagher's roommate.



In the wake of this unexpected chaos, Peter begins to snap, and when he isn't flashing back to guys sponging up the murder scene, he's roaming the streets and poking at a dead rat with a stick. And wouldya believe, all of this is even *less* exciting than it sounds? Meanwhile, Mikhail grabs Cusack's leg on the street and causes her to spill hot coffee, mysteriously appears in supporting characters' homes, and crawls into bed with Cusack (who later gives him a bath).

Soon, everyone is cracking up—setting themselves on fire, leaping from a window, falling from a bridge, and doing anything to escape being in this movie. If you're wondering who the hell Dr. Ramirez is, he (played by the late Ron Vawter) runs the clinic that the entire cast (both alive and seemingly dead) wind up at, during a 'surprise' finale which most viewers will never have the patience to witness.

Alternately sledgehammer and naive (a Yuppie has an empty life? No shit!), this is so slow-paced that if you hit the Fast Forward button, the characters *still* look like they're walking about normally. More important, Sellars has to learn that you don't have to make a monotonous movie just because your characters have monotonous lives! There's striking location photography by David Watkin (who shot most of Richard Lester's early, good films) and impressive sets (such as Cusack's Picasso Blue bedroom), but nothing can undercut the overwhelming

annoyance this pic registers. Even a cameo appearance by Colonel Klink himself, Werner Klemperer, can't save this muddle.

MY SOUL IS SLASHED [Kamitsukitai] (VSoM; 1991).

Director Shusuke Kaneko is best known to US filmgoers for his recent high-octane update of *GAMERA*. But as far as I'm concerned, his most remarkable work is this vampire film, fueled by a clever, genre-subverting script by Takeshi Kawamura (who later directed the jaw-dropping *LAST FRANKENSTEIN*) and a stunning lead performance from arthouse-regular Ken Ogata (*VENGEANCE IS MINE*, *MISHIMA*). The result is not only gorgeously lensed, but one of the most unique vampire movies of the '90s—expertly mixing the classic mythos with Japanese genre filmmaking (not to mention, touches of bizarre humor).

A centuries-old packet of Dracula's blood (which, mind you, throbs on its own) has become mixed up with the usual blood supply of a Tokyo hospital. Meanwhile, when an uptight pharmaceutical businessman named Ishikawa (Ogata) suspects improprieties with his company's medicine, he becomes the object of an 'accidental' hit 'n' run. Needing a transfusion, it unknowingly comes from this Evil Undead Bloodsucker—and when Ishikawa passes away, everyone thinks it's for good. Ha!

Following advice from female vampire fanatic Izuko, Ishikawa's daughter drips her virgin blood onto dad's remains; and a year later, he suddenly turns up in his old home, naked and unaware that anything is wrong. Of course, his daughter and co-workers are a tad alarmed by his reappearance. Keeping himself from aging with a handy glass of blood, Isuko convinces him he's the new Dracula, aided by his lack of reflection and wind-machine-like reaction to a crucifix.

There's much more to the story than the usual trappings. Ishikawa's return gives him the opportunity to regret his past errors in life, meet his own assassins, and set things right with both his family and old employer. Don't forget Izuko's fetish-like obsession for Ishikawa's vampiric charms, a vampire-to-human transfusion device laced with crucifixes, and the radical notion that it's often *good* to be Dracula. From family-man to white-haired avenger, Ogata brings a world-weary intensity to the role, and best of all, plays it dead-serious. Pocked with moments of sheer cinematic bliss and modern twists (like learning how to fly by leaping off a playground jungle gym), there's even a EuroPop tune over the end credits, sung by the unfathomable Mylene Farmer. All in all, a fascinating addition to an increasingly anemic genre.

**YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT (1968).**

Tiny Tim might be gone, but that lovable hairball lives on in this counterculture item from director-cameraman Barry Feinstein, who contributed photography to *MONTEREY POP* and *EASY RIDER* (and who, from the look of it, was more stoned than his subjects). Co-produced by Peter Yarrow (of Peter, Paul and Mary), this edits together a shitload of hippie footage and bounces from one scene to another with the type of 'logic' that only severe drug inducement could cause. In other words, this blast from the past is highly recommended if you're on acid, even though some of the slower portions will have you roaming about your pad and staring at your lava lamp instead. Of course, if you're straight [insert:

audible shudder] you'll have little patience for its throbbing rhythms and endless, hand-held scenes of its brain-fried subjects.

From our first gander at its tripped-out camerawork (which makes a simple walk down the street look like a peyote high), we're a visitor to Hippie Hell. There's "Super Spade" (a counterculture hero who was murdered in '67 for giving away free LSD) calling up all of his ladies; the ridiculous Father Malcolm Boyd dancing with flower children on a beach; going into the desert for a Drum-In; and lots of folks who were obviously so burnt out that they never realized they were being filmed. In other words, this is one big, unfocused overview of the scene, with rapid-fire editing (courtesy of Howard Alk, who also pieced together *RENALDO AND CLARA* and *FESTIVAL*, and co-directed *JANIS*), good locales, and little time for any hard info.

Still, the highlight is during Tiny Tim In Concert, as he warbles "Be My Baby" to an audience of (difficult to believe) swooning young girls. This guy is incredible! Imagine Mick Jagger crossed with Pee-Wee Herman! Later, he reappears for a version of "I Got You, Babe" with a female singer several octaves lower than him, plus a shirt 'n' tie ensemble that literally made my eyes hurt. I could make a fortune selling it on St. Marks nowadays.

Is there one word to describe this movie? How about, groovy? Is there another? Yeah, idiotic. Though not the best take on that era, it's surely one of the more incoherent, which probably made it a fave for its time. Colorful, brutally lensed and edited, and really short (only 74 minutes), this freak-out documentary has much to show, but little to actually say.

THE SANTA TAPES (1975).

I'm always on the lookout for pics that expose the true spirit of Christmas, and this brief (14 minute) short is a gritty, b&w gem. Awhile back, I raved about Scott Jacobs' *THE LAS VEGAS TAPES*, which dunked the viewer deep into the seediest niches of that Nevada hot spot. This pic, lensed on December 15, 1975, is equally impressive, as it profiles Art Baldwin, who for three decades was *the* Santa at Chicago's Marshall Field and Co. department store.

This guy was the biggest, best Santa in town. But once we journey into his dressing room, we see that this guy is actually a grumpy old fart who freely admits he's only doing it for the money, since he can rake in \$1300 a month (and that's in 1975 dollars!). He then proves he's legitimately fat by pulling on his outfit for the camera, then gluing on his fake beard and cascade of white hair. After that, we watch him dealing with a few of the 4,000 rugrats he saw ever day, as well as how relieved he seems when his hellish shift is over. In the most ironic twist, he admits that he doesn't have any family to actually share Xmas with.

Art Baldwin died in 1983 at the age of 87, and although I wish Jacobs had gotten more footage on the guy, I'm glad that he was around to get what he did—giving us a hard-boiled glimpse into the life of a professional Santa. Deftly slicing open the underbelly of the holiday season and letting its viscera shine, this is the perfect antidote to the Xmas season, warts and all. Yes, it's a wonderful life...unless you're this guy, that is.

BLACKMAIL (Luminous; 1968).

Welcome to the ever-groovy, late-'60s, Italian style, courtesy of director Paolo Solvay (a.k.a. Ivan Katansky, or in reality, Luigi Batzella)—who lays on the sleazy fun with a back hoe. Loaded with swarthy males, half-nekkid females, and an apparent lack of morals when it comes to the pursuit of quick cash, this ingratiating thriller comes complete with hilarious dubbing that tries to approximate the current 'hip' lingo.

It kicks off with a wild party which promises a good time for all, especially when the luscious Babel (Brigitte Skay, complete with odd, seemingly-painted-on freckles) strips off her top on the dance floor. Unfortunately, the cops—looking for drugs—break up the fun and arrest Babel. Then her dad, a staid businessman, is warned that if he's not careful, his pot-smoking daughter will soon move onto heroin and then crime, in order to support her habit. Horrors!

Even though Babel is just a whiny, trust-fund, thriller-seeker, she's also got a sicker, more manipulative side (which actually makes her a *little* more likable). And minutes after being hauled out of jail by daddy, she's back on the beach, "bogarting the joint" and coming up with a plan of putting herself through a fake kidnapping, in order to squeeze more money out of her father. A foolproof scheme? Not likely, especially when her hippie pals are so sloppy and unprofessional. First, they set themselves up in a remote house, and forget to bring any food. Then the real owners of the place show up without warning, one of the "kidnappers" is accidentally killed, and the others bury him in the backyard. The biggest hitch comes when they demand their quarter-million ransom, since Babel's bitchy stepmother is actually *glad* this human barnacle is out of their life, and ends up stealing the cash instead.

The first half-hour is nicely psychedelic, but after that, it slows down and turns into increasingly-convoluted EuroTrash, highlighted by the clothing-challenged Skay. And instead of intelligence, this slight but stylish crime romp benefits from its hodgepodge of cold-hearted, sexy, pothead rebels. Better still is the filmmakers' love of casual abuse, a smidgen of lesbo action between Babel and a black maid, an insanely corpse-laden finale, and a groovy twist to boot—all crammed into only 77 minutes worth of film stock.

THE DEBAUCHERS (J4HI; 1970).

This early hardcore exploitation pic has it all. Courtesy of director Sidney Knight, our tawdry ride begins when May (Angela Snenck) takes an "experimental film" modeling job in order to buy Jack, her lazy-assed boyfriend, a stock car. From there on in, we get a sicko's delight, with a script full of ill twists and detestable mindgames.

For her interview, May has to go to the estate of a millionaire named Tom Waters (Claude Rube). And with a chance of making \$250 dollars a day (and that's in 1970 dollars!), she even shrugs off a warning by the house psychiatrist that Tom is "peculiar." That's a polite way of putting it! You see, Waters turns out to be an unshaven, snotty, lard-ass in a dirty t-shirt, who makes Ron Jeremy look like Ron Ely.

During her first screen test, Tom suddenly demands that she strip, spread and masturbate for the camera—literally tossing money at her until she does so. But when May calls Jack for

help, he's instead won over by Tom's bulging roll of cash and urges her to stay on and finish the film (which, according to the silver-tongued Tom, is about "erotic relationships between homo sapiens"). Soon, Jack and May are schtupping for the pic, and when May is actually raped on camera, Jack explains to her that "it's only a film. It's only make believe." Boy, this Tom is a real peach.

Like most X-flicks, the plot grinds to a halt whenever the characters begin grinding away in bed, but it's also so cheesy you can't help but smile (such as when a foursome has to cram onto a flimsy, pull-out couch). Following tradition, most of the acting is sucks. The exceptions are Rube, who belongs in the Cinema Pervert Hall of Fame; and Snenck, who looks so distressed that you wonder if she's actually acting, or genuinely repulsed by this job. Worth a look for its hilariously abusive, Findley-level fetishism (which even touches upon the infamous snuff genre), as well as the always-timely theme that money will indeed buy anything. Plus, it's hard *not* to admire a sleazy sex film which has the balls to portray the making of a (similarly) sleazy sex film in such a gloriously rancid light.



The sizzling story of sadism, perversion
and degradation
in a woman's prison!



THE DETENTION GIRLS (1970).

Women In Prison fans (like me) will undoubtedly *want* to enjoy this early, ultra-skanky genre entry. But after viewing this slammer swill, I couldn't believe that director John Rappoport (much less, the rest of the cast and crew) agreed to lend their real names to this rock-bottom sexploiter. From the look of it, I wouldn't be surprised if this was their one-and-only gig.

It starts out sleazy enough, and before three minutes have passed, a quartet of new inmates are read the rules, strip out of their street clothes, change into skimpy prison dresses, and head straight for the showers, for a long, soapy one. Gosh, their breasts must be filthy, because all they do is scrub at them in close-up. And luckily, they're all so instantly friendly that they happily wash each other...Even a female guard lends a hand.

OK, for the first ten minutes, this softcore slop is good for a drunken laugh, thanks to its lack of subtlety. But from there on, we leave the prison and follow a white slavery businessman who procures young ladies from the lock-up and takes a liking to a naive, blonde "fresh fish" (whose black lesbian cellmate tries to take advantage of her—but politely stops when Blondie admits she's there because of a civil rights demonstration). Still, that doesn't stop her from being stripped naked, hung by her hands and whipped (as a female guard gleefully fondles her nightstick). Later, she's drugged by the Doc and sexually abused in the infirmary. And we mustn't forget the obligatory catfight, bare-assed ping-pong paddle spankings, and Blondie turning into a hardened con after getting anally raped.

Starring Jennifer Early, Dolly Abrams and Ann Welles, there are plenty of tits and tortures on display, but it's all slow-paced, sub-standard slop. And if nothing else, this is certainly the smallest prison in history, with only a dozen inmates and half as many cells. The sound is muddy, the dialogue is laughable, and on the only positive note, my umpteenth-generation copy was so grainy that it obscured most of the actresses' stretch marks and blemishes. The only thing these filmmakers accomplished was making a movie that's as much fun as actually being in prison yourself.

DON'T WORRY, WE'LL THINK OF A TITLE (1966).

Morey Amsterdam fanatics can rejoice in the fact that the wisecracking, half-pint co-star of THE DICK VAN DYKE SHOW once had a crack at the big-screen, by starring, producing, co-scripting, and bringing his Grossinger's-level comic schtick to this limp b&w comedy—which barely got a release. More embarrassing, he dragged his sitcom cronies, Richard Deacon and Rose Marie, along on this laugh-barren spy spoof.

Morey stars as Charlie, the inept cook at a greasy spoon named the Daredevil Diner, while Rose is Annie the waitress, Deacon plays the short-fused owner (and also turns up later as a chief of police, without any explanation), and January Jones (who, from her lack of talent, must've been screwing Morey, off-camera) is another waitress, Magda. But when Madga inherits a smalltown Book Shoppe, Rose and Morey decide to help her run the place, and the wackiness goes into overdrive when Morey is mistaken for a missing cosmonaut, Yasha Noodnik. Then it fragments into even dimmer subplots, since the bookstore is also a meeting place for subversive spies; there are two mysterious guys digging in the basement every night; and it all adds up to a diabolical scheme to bore American moviegoers to death.

Directed by Harmon Jones (best known for editing A-level pics like GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT), the entire production has that flat, '60s-TV look—like it was one interminable, feature-length sitcom. And poor Morey and Rose are lost without their usual laugh track, because after each hoary joke, the silence is deadening. Hey, at least the cameos are a blast, including Danny Thomas and Forrest Tucker as diner customers, Cliff "Charlie Weaver" Arquette as one of the Russkies, Moe Howard as a lawyer (?), plus Milton Berle, Carl Reiner (with and w/o his toupee), and Steve Allen touting his latest book. Best of all, while hitching, Morey is picked up by Irene Ryan as Granny, driving the BEVERLY HILLBILLIES truck!

Admittedly, this crapola is so disjointed that it's nearly hallucinatory at times, such as when Morey makes the scene at a groovy "beatnik party." Or how about the sight of Deacon in a Beatles wig? And when they run out of ideas, they pull an impromptu wrap-up, and roll the end credits. At the very least, this proves that they too realized just how stupid this project was. As far as comedy-team flicks go, this batch of idiotic gags, passed off as a movie, makes THE MALTESE BIPPY look good!

THE GERMAN CHAINSAW MASSACRE [Das Deutsche Kettensägen Massaker] (Blackest Heart; 1990) and TERROR 2000 [Deutschland Ausser Kontrolle] (1992).

These two thoroughly fucked-up pics are the second and third in a crude, underground trilogy from director Christoph Schlingensief. Unfortunately, when it came to CHAINSAW, the only print I could find was in German, without subtitles. But with a title this silly and a film this out of control, I really didn't care. Beginning with the so-far-unobtainable 100 YEARS OF ADOLPH HITLER (with Udo Kier playing Der Führer!), this short (slightly over a hour), sick sequel is set during the beginnings of Germany's unification—with Schlingensief utilizing real footage of the celebration as a backdrop for his horrific tale! And while its political subtleties were lost on me, it's still a rude 'n' wild ride.

When East German Clara (Karina Fallenstein) is sexually attacked, a tongue-wagging old fart 'saves' her by bashing in her attacker's head with a rock. After that, she's taken in by a household of West German human butchers, complete with their own well-worn abattoir. As psychos go, they're a goofy quartet. After abusing Clara, they drive around the burnt-out factory district in the convertible, singing, and finally pull a couple over, put a clown mask on the guy and beat him over the head with a pipe (oooh, pulpy!). Then they take a chainsaw to the woman. Never skimping on the grue, one victim refuses to die, and stumbles about, covered in blood and loose flesh.

All of this is purposely absurd, cheap, and grotesque, and I particularly enjoyed it when a woman is run-down by a car, and you can actually see the stunt-mannequin's wig fly off at impact! Better still, after the bottom half of her body is torn away, she just lays there and argues! Then, in what appears to be a dream sequence, Udo Kier shows up in a German military uniform and Hitler hair-style. But instead of the usual mustache, a swastika is painted on his upper lip. Later, he turns up in a woman's wig, sings "Hey, Big Spender," pours booze over his hair, lights it, and finally chops off his own hand with a meat cleaver. Certainly NOT one of his subtler performances, but a must-see for any fans.

Schlingensief's follow-up, TERROR 2000, (believe it or not) gets even more strident, with a cast of totally unlikable characters. The story begins when a West German social worker and a Polish refugee family are attacked by a band of psychos;

and in the aftermath, enter two police inspectors (rotund Peter Kern and haggard-looking Fassbinder-vet Margit Carstensen) on the case.

The most deviant fun lies with furniture store owner Boessler and his motley bunch of neo-Nazis, who are terrorizing the area. Included in the bunch is Kuehnen, a queer Nazi with AIDS; while the always-insane Udo Kier shows up in a priest collar, beating himself in the head with a crucifix. Soon, Udo and his misfits (including one guy in a KKK-style hood) begin driving around town, running down their enemies and laughing. Meanwhile, Inspector Peter is getting all sweaty over some blonde slut from his past, who's now



hanging out with these asswipes. In order to get a confession, he has to rape her, and she (of course) loves it.

As you can see, nobody in this film escapes from Schlingensiefel's beer fart of ridicule. This hit-and-miss insanity bounces from one chaotic episode to another, with plenty of bizarre laughs—such as when Margit informs a character that his family is dead, and he goes (hilariously) nuts. There's also any excuse for a bucketful of cheap gore, especially when Udo and company go completely off the deep end in the final reel. This may sound like fun on the surface, but much of it left me unaffected. I could understand what Schlingensiefel was aiming at, but perhaps something was lost in the translation. More likely, chalk it up to his inability to develop non-cartoon characters or a coherent storyline. It's a belligerent mess.

MOVE (1970).

Nowadays, it's difficult to remember that Elliott Gould was once a highly respected star, as well as an icon of offbeat rebellion, with pics like *M*A*S*H*, *BOB & CAROL & TED & ALICE* and *GETTING STRAIGHT*. Of course, he then blew that wad in the late '70s with sewage like the boxing kangaroo movie, *MATILDA*. It's no surprise, because anyone who'll shack up with Barbra Streisand has got to have a death wish.

Directed by the eclectic (but terminally mediocre) Stuart Rosenberg, this is a total misfire. At first glance, I thought otherwise, because how can you dislike a movie that opens with a shot down 42nd Street, with the crowds of people walking *backwards*, while Elliott is the only one out of step, and walking *forwards* (ahh, the simple wonders of reverse photography). Then we get Gould stuck in fresh tar and flattened (literally) by a steam roller. Alas, from there on, it's all downhill, as we take a trip into his character's empty, unlikable mind.

Gould plays Hiram Jaffe, an aspiring writer and professional dog walker, who's "drowning in crap" and dealing badly with the usual NYC pressures—like moving to a new apartment. He's upset that his 'real' writing is ignored, while his pornographic-prose is recognized; while his relationship with ditzy, live-in girlfriend, Dolly (Paula Prentiss) is ripping at the seams. Full of urban paranoia and fueled by his overactive imagination, he also slips into his own ridiculous fantasies. Most of the time, you simply feel like slapping the guy in the mouth with a phone book.

Hiram is the type of schmuck who gets so intimidated by a blind old beggar that he strips off all of his clothes (and talk about a need for some Nair on a guy's back—ughh!—it looks like some type of fungus); and he's so boring that even his psychiatrist falls asleep on him (I wish I had been so lucky). Along the way, he actually finds a woman as annoying as he is, in the form of British model Genevieve Waite (*JOANNA*), who makes breakfast topless for Gould and drags him into her bed. The fact that his big, ugly St. Bernard keeps drooling on everyone is just another debit.

Co-starring a pre-*SUPERFLY* Ron O'Neal and Mae Questal as one of Gould's dog-walking clients, this is a shred of a movie, amusing only for its more indulgent sequences, such as Gould painting his apartment in the buff. It's little more than studio-fed claptrap posing (unsuccessfully) as a 'with it' comedy. If you want a *real* dose of NYC angst, I'd recommend the pitch-black *LITTLE MURDERS* (also starring Gould) instead.

HATE [Haine; *La Credo de la Violence*] (VSoM; 1979).

In his autobiography, the late great Klaus Kinski freely admitted that he made most of his films purely for the cash. Looking at some of the shit he starred in, that's immediately apparent, and when it came to this French-lensed motorcycle/vengeance drama, he said the "so-called director passes most of the time in bars," and that co-star Maria Schneider (best known for *LAST TANGO IN PARIS*) "has become a junkie and makes me sick."

With quotes like that, I felt compelling to check out this crock, even though the video was lacking English subtitles or dubbing. Besides, how bad could it be with Kinski as a biker? In a word, dull. And the first disappointment

is that Klaus doesn't play a grubby, late-'60s, drive-in-style biker. Instead, he's more of a Euro-sportsman, far from an action hero, and primarily, just an innocent guy who ends up in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Most of the story is set in a small, rural village, just as a little girl is found dead by the roadside. And unbeknownst to the mourning townsfolk, a black-garbed motorcyclist was in the area at the time. Instead, the only suspect is the white-garbed (ooh, subtle) Kinski, who gets a cool reception from the barroom locals. This stranger is pretty innocuous, all in all—he gets a bed for the night, loves to play with kids, and comes to the aid of the haggard-looking

Schneider (another town pariah, due to her illegit kid). But when he tries to leave town, he's run off the road by some type of blue-collar conspiracy. Even though we know he's not to blame, Kinski winds up beaten to a pulp, and finally tied (Christ-like, of course) to an electrical transformer and zapped to death.

Even at only 88 minutes, this slight stuff, and while Kinski is as personable as ever, he's given nothing to do. Plus, since Klaus always wears a full helmet and visor as he rides, you know he never actually got on a cycle for this quick paycheck. In more capable hands, this could've been a minor chunk of bike-sploitation, but writer-director Dominique Gault doesn't seem to have clue. The entire production looks like shit, and even the sleaze factor is submerged for no apparent reason. Chalk it up as another instantly forgettable turd in Kinski's bumpy career.

LUMINOUS MOSS [Hikarigoke] (VSoM; 1992).

I bet you enjoy those cannibal movies, don't you? Especially the ones with titles like *CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST* and *THREE ON A MEAT-HOOK*? Well, this Japanese import is a whole different ball game, so don't get your hopes up, you sickos. Dead serious and agonizingly depressing, this makes *ALIVE* look like a Frank Capra flick.

In a present-day wraparound, a writer is shown around the peninsula at the eastern tip of Hokkaido, courtesy of the local Headmaster. The trip is highlighted by a cave filled with strange, luminous moss, as well as a story which occurred back in 1943, when a shipload of Japanese Merchant Marines went down in the area, and the survivors were stranded in that cave, during a severe winter. Three months later, only the frost-bitten Captain made it back alive, while the question arises—what the hell did the guy *eat* during all that time?

All the clues point to cannibalism of his own men, and in flashbacks, we follow the Captain and his three surviving crew members on a desperate quest to survive. They're trapped inside the freezing cave, without any food, and with

only a lone box of found matches allowing them to make a fire. But when the first crewman dies, the "resourceful" Captain convinces the others that eating the body is the only way they can survive and be loyal to their Emperor. So laid out like a frozen buffet, they strip their comrade and filet his corpse.

This grim ride is only beginning, because we get to watch the men gag down the shreds of flesh and agonize afterward about their actions. And much the movie is spent inside the icy cave, watching them starve, and then feed off the latest casualty. Meanwhile, according to legend, if someone eats human flesh, a ring of light will appear around their head (just like luminous moss) as a recurring symbol of their guilt. Once returned to civilization, the unremorseful Captain is put on trial—which comes together into a powerful, often dreamlike finale.

Directed by Kei Kumai (*SANDAKAN NO.8*), this is a quietly-told tale of survival—but at what cost? Rentaro Mikumi (*KWAIDAN*, *RIKYU*) plays a dual role as both Headmaster and Captain, and as the later, gives a strong, ultimately wrenching performance. Totally lacking in social skills, he informs the last of his dying men that he'll be eaten the moment he's passed away (and doesn't seem to understand when the guy is pissed off at the notion). All in all, a powerful, downbeat film that'll have most viewers longing for that old Monty Python cannibal-lifeboat skit, for a much-needed breath of fresh air.



SURFARI [a.k.a. Blue Surf-ari] (Gary Balaban, 182 Jackson Street, Brooklyn, NY 11211. \$25 ppd; 1967).

In the wake of successful surfing pics such as *THE ENDLESS SUMMER*, there were plenty of forgotten imitators, such as this profile of the scene from director-producer Milton Blair. Loaded with now-vintage footage of the West Coast curls, hot-doggers, nose-rides, and wipe-outs, it's actually at its best when avoiding the beach altogether and checking out the goofy, boardwalk surf culture instead.

It starts out in California's Rodondo Beach, riding the waves with 1967 International Surf Champ Ricky Grigg and pal John Teague on an 'average' day. First, they save a drowning Frenchman's life, then pick up two beach bunny girlfriends and give these dolls a surfing lesson at Malibu. The surf footage by Edward de Priest looks more like grainy home movies, and what the clips lack in quality, they (unfortunately) make up for in quantity.

One of the best aspects of the pic is the bongo-heavy soundtrack by The Blazers (best known for their surf fave, "Beaver Patrol"); while the continual, ham-handed narration by Hal Buckley chimes in with plenty of worthless info. This packs in all of the beach clichés, including dune buggy action; a surfing contest; a bikini contest (with the cameraman so absorbed that he cuts off most of the contestants' heads); and a bunch of "outta sight" cats swinging to a live appearance from The Blazers. The action peeks during a couple sidelines: The first, to Australia and its surfing fanatics, and later, Grigg's visit to Hawaii's infamous Banzai Pipeline.

Since there obviously weren't enough surfing clips to make a feature, Blair even tosses in some stock skiing footage (?) to stretch it to its whopping 90 minutes. In addition, Teague tries out the "new" fad of skateboarding, these wacky kids have a spaghetti food fight, and Frenchie is chased around by a fat Hawaiian girl. Ha! What merriment! Of course, without character development or kick-ass footage, this embellished travelogue quickly gets tiring. Still, it's good for a few laughs at the expense of these drenched dullards.

THE PASSAGE [Le Passage] (VSoM; 1986).

Alain Delon is best known for his suave turns in French arthouse/cult items such as *LE SAMOURAI*. So this intriguing, but often soft-hearted fantasy (which he also produced) was a decided change of pace, since it's aimed more at very twisted children. In it, Delon stars as Jean Diaz, a divorced father with a young son, David (Alain Musy), as well as a reclusive filmmaker, whose past work has included such violent fare as "The Screaming Death".


Things get appreciably weirder when we meet The Grim Reaper, sitting before a bank of voyeuristic TV screens, typing away at its super-computer keyboard and trying to find a proper subject. One car 'accident' later, Jean gets to meet Death (complete with shadowy cowl, scythe and optional cigarette holder), and it seems that Death is a big fan of Diaz's films, and wants him to make a new animated production. With his son's life at stake, he reluctantly agrees to work for Death and slave away in some netherworld prison cell. But Jean doesn't realize that Death is looking for fresh ideas and plans on implementing all of this imaginative carnage upon the Earth.

Only li'l David knows (somehow) that his Dad has been kidnapped, and that in order to escape, he must find The Passage—a mist-filled rift between Life and Death. And when Death snatches David from a haunted house ride, this rugrat ends up trapped (in live action) inside one of his pop's cartoons. Indeed, the best moments involve the wild, very unchildlike snippets of animation from Diaz's magnum opus. Primarily in b&w (except for the blood, which is in all its scarlet glory), this offers up some cool, sanguinary images—such as a TV screen gushing with blood and the stripes of the American flag turning into streams of blood. Suddenly, this film isn't just for kids anymore.

Delon gives a typically fine performance, and has a chance to be more humane than usual in the role of a loving father. Meanwhile, director René Manzor has a soft heart, a good eye, and a firm grasp on the more fantastic elements. Of course, the downside for adults is a cringeably upbeat story, with Delon hammering home the evils of violence in the world. Still, it's fun to see a high-tech Death (with make-up FX courtesy of Christopher Tucker), even if this is little more than a nicely lensed, low-grade kiddie fable.

Don Brown presents

A New Dimension in Thrills and Excitement!



Ricky Grigg
1967 World SURF CHAMPION

IN **SURFARI**

Co-Starring
GREG NOIL - SUE PETERSON - FRENCHIE
PLUS 1000 Wave Hunters
Filmed in Brilliant Color!

DEATH IN THE SEINE (1989).

Made in conjunction with the French Bicentennial (and reportedly, rejected for UK TV), the ever-obsessive Peter Greenaway sets his sights on a series of corpses, pulled from the River Seine just after the French Revolution, between the years 1795-1801. Over that period, 306 bodies were discovered and brought to the morgue, with meticulous notes taken by the pair of attendants. This short film is Greenaway's unique, typically-methodical take on 23 of these demises.

Examining them one at a time, Greenaway recreates the corpses and their post-mortem exams, with Jean-Michel Dagory and Jim van der Woude playing, respectively, morgue-men Bouille and Daude. The bodies are young and old, often naked and definitely dead as *le doornail*, as Greenaway's camera pans unflinchingly from foot to head (with one guy's huge stomach filling the screen like a Macy's balloon). Meanwhile, a narrator reads the facts concerning how they were found, who they were, and speculation on the circumstances behind their death.

The structure of the film is more akin to Greenaway's early shorts than his later, more narrative pieces. Yet like *PROSPERO'S BOOKS* and *PILLOW BOOK*, Greenaway uses Paintbox graphics to layer on his imagery, while incorporating smaller windows of information within the primary scene—the cinematic equivalent of a footnote. And even if the individual facts seem a tad repetitious, they comprise a larger, more fascinating picture.

Graced by a Michael Nyman soundtrack, this runs a merciful 44 minutes, and since I doubt the subject matter could've stood up to a grueling, *THE FALLS*-style length, I'm relieved Peter didn't try to cover *all* 306 case studies (primarily because I would've been crazy enough to watch it all). Gorgeously cinematic and full of clinically disturbing images, this breathes life and style into an obscure niche of history.

TENDERNESS OF THE WOLVES [Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe] (1973).

Before moving onto more typical genre slop like *THE BOOGEY MAN*, Ulli Lommel was part of Fassbinder's acting troupe, and appeared in many of his arthouse oddities. But as far as I'm concerned, the high point of his career was this morbid murder yarn, which reeks of obsession. Produced by Fassbinder and populated by many of his players (Margit Carstensen, Ingrid Caven, Brigitte Mira), Rainer Werner himself even turns up in the small role of Wittowski, a slick-haired, black-market crook. Go figure, at the time of its US release, this powerful pic was stuck in specialty screenings which emphasized its homosexual edge (Heavens!).

Based on the true tale of jailed mass-murderer Peter Kurten (here called Fritz Haarman), Kurt Raab (another Fassbinder vet) stars and scripts this late-'40s period piece, playing a bald homosexual who picks up teenaged boys (and immediately reminds one of Peter Lorre in *M*, which, no coincidence, was

The First Gay Vampire Movie

R.W. FASSBINDER'S

production of

*Tenderness of
the Wolves*

Directed by Ulli Lommel



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also based on the same person). Oddly enough, the morning after each of his conquests, he sells a surprisingly large pot of freshly-cut meat to a local shop. And while his neighbors notice Fritz's home has become the pedophile equivalent of a roach motel (not to mention, the late-night hacking noises emanating from his room), since he's also a police informant, Haarman is never considered a suspect.

Part policier, part psycho-drama and part queasy black comedy, this was pretty startling for its time, what with its mingling of serial killer sadism and blatantly gay eroticism—complete with the appropriate male nudity. At the center of it all, Raab is perfectly, lovably despicable, with snaky charms that *almost* make you forgive the magnitude of his crimes. Of course, he's never very subtle anytime a cute boy turns up on camera, or when chewing on the throat of one young pick-up (hence, its vampiric rep). In addition, cinematographer Jürgen Jürges (yet *another* Fassbinder regular) certainly doesn't make Germany look like a vacation destination, what with his gray, poor and dismal viewpoint. FYI, look closely for a pre-DAS BOOT Jürgen Prochnow as "1st Fence." Above all, this is a poetic rendering of a shocking tale, which finds the last vestiges of humanity hiding under all of that blood.

SLAVES OF LOVE (Media; 1969).

There were so many generic sex flicks released during the late-'60s that it's always a treat to stumble across a piece of lurid swill that isn't afraid to take some wackier turns during its prurient pursuits. In this instance, director Charles Nizet (VOODOO HEARTBEAT) knows what his audience wants, and sums it up in four little words: Naked women with guns!

Investigating the disappearance of several planes, all over a particular section of "uncharted waters," Joe, Troy, and their groovy goatees fly off to investigate. When their plane is mysteriously downed, and their kidnappers turn out to be an island full of scantily-clad Amazon babes, who's complaining? Soon, the two are captured by a trio of cuties, equipped with machine guns and mini-skirts so short that half their bare ass hangs out in the breeze. Plus, every so often, the story grinds to a halt for some hilariously cheesy T&A, such as while in the middle of taking the males back to their complex, the gals enjoy an impromptu nude swim—which goes on for *ten fucking minutes!*

Joe and Troy try to overpower these brazen "fiends," who continually subject our heroes to their NUDE BODIES! Then they're taken to the ladies' underground lair, where Joe is forced to HAVE SEX with all of the women, including their Chief (Tina Brown)! Will the horrors never cease for these poor guys?! Of course, they're never told that all of the previous male captors have been executed, or that they're next in line.

This crude, but lovably offbeat flick is a lot of fun, thanks to its goofy plot and Nizet's fine sense of sleaze (even expository scenes happen to have a topless dancer lounging about in the foreground). The cast couldn't act to save their lives but, on the female end, are appropriately photogenic. The filmmakers also do their damndest to cut corners. Joe narrates the strange tale from the present day, which saved on sync-sound costs. And though the sets for the Amazon base are wonderfully trippy, most of the movie takes place in the cheap outdoors. It clocks it at only 70 minutes, but minus all the nude swims, nude erotic dances and nude sunbathing, this has about three minutes worth of actual plot. Like I said earlier, who's complaining?

GEMINI AFFAIR: A DIARY (Shocking Videos; 1973).

This early '70s drive-in artifact is, essentially, a skanky li'l melodrama about a young actress who journeys to Hollywood and soon discovers it's just one big meat market. It's hoary territory, no question, but I'm always a sucker for the films of Matt Cimber (a.k.a. Matteo Ottaviani) who, in addition being the third husband of Jayne Mansfield, graced grindhouses with such cinematic sucker-punches as THE CANDY TANGERINE MAN and Pia Zardora's numbing BUTTERFLY. In other words, this guys certainly knows his sleaze.

More important, this cut-rate slop stars Marta Kristen, who (as any Sci-Fi Channel geek knows) played celestial cutie Judy Robinson in the old LOST IN SPACE TV-series. Here she's the naive Julie, who comes to California for a screen test and stays with rich, ex-Indiana girlfriend Jessica (Kathy Kersh) at her palatial pad. But, uh-oh, it seems that Jessica is actually a high-priced call girl; and though Julie is shocked at first, soon they're sleeping together in the king-size bed. Later, Julie proves her mettle by firing the witchy housekeeper (Anne Seymour) when she tries to wake up Jessica before noon.

Of course, show business is harsh. Jobs are scarce, men are dogs, and fame-hungry Julie refuses to screw a producer or even doff her duds for the camera (unlike the real-life Kristen, that is). But soon, the world's oldest profession is the only route, and when it makes her feel dirty, that's the cue for the obligatory lesbian sex scene, as naked Julie and Jessica begin humping each other at length.

Blandly lensed and laced with sentimental pathos, this is nothing but heavyhanded, slow-moving soap opera sexploitation. Try to imagine HOLLY-

WOOD BOULEVARD without the laughs. In addition, most of the film is shot in this one house (and it wouldn't surprise me if it was Cimber's actual home), while Kristen proudly shakes what she's got (or nowadays, make that 'had') for the camera, while putting any LOST IN SPACE fetishists into masturbatory overdrive. Still, the sleazier elements are inexplicably downplayed, almost as if Cimber was so deluded that he thought he was making an honest-to-goodness *movie!* What a kook!

ORIGINAL UN-CUT SWEDISH VERSION

the doll

BANNED IN ENGLAND



THE DOLL [Vaxdockan] (1962).

This Swedish psychodrama comes with solid credentials, including a starring role by Per Oscarsson (best known for later arthouse successes like HUNGER) and one of Sweden's most influential producers, Lorens Marmstedt. Still, it was sold in the US like some type of sleazy, degenerate sex-pic. In some ways it is, and that's precisely why I enjoyed this brooding treat.

Oscarsson plays Lundgren, a lonely night watchman who endlessly laments (in voiceover) that he has no one in his life, and stares so intensely at pairs of lovers that they tell the creep to scram. In other words, this guy is a drag. But things pick up for him after one of his Stockholm department store shifts, when he takes one of the naked female mannequins home to his dreary attic apartment. Sneaking it past the other tenants, he puts it in bed, buys it flowers, and is a happy man now that he's got a "woman" in his life. So far, he's just your average, greasy-haired deviant, but all that changes when the dummy comes to life in the form of a brunette babe (Gio Petré, who also turned up in Sarno's DADDY, DARLING).

From here on in, Lundgren's life goes straight into the crapper. He calls in sick for work, because she demands his full attention. He's laughed out of a lingerie shop when trying to buy her some clothes. He even steals an expensive diamond bracelet for her. Of course, Lundgren is the only one who ever sees her come to life, and she transforms back into a mannequin when suspicious next-door neighbors break in and find "her" in bed. You see, unlike the Andrew McCarthy epic, MANNEQUIN, there's no magic at work—simply the delusions of a Swedish loonie who's getting worse by the minute.

This is all far from risqué, mind you, and the most we get is a milli-second of bare backside, or this living doll lounging about in only a shirt and high heels. Primarily, this is a depression-fest that doesn't let one shaft of light seep through (with appropriately shadowy b&w photography by Ake Dahlqvist). Meanwhile, this perpetual geek is impossible to warm up to—he's pathetic, loopy, anti-social, and looks like Sweden's answer to Steve Buscemi. Brilliantly acted by Oscarsson, this cinematic dirge makes most Ingmar Bergman pics look like Shirley Temple musicals.

VIJ [a.k.a. Vj, King of the Ghosts] (Luminous; 1967).

This is a truly amazing film! It may start a little slow, but wait it out, and I promise you will *not* be disappointed! What with its initially quaint veneer, this looks like some children's fantasy, but by the end, you'll be bowled by this burst of artistry and imagination, which overflows with demented imagery that puts any modern-day film to shame.

Based on Russian legend (as well as the short story by Nicolas Gogol), this Soviet fantasy is set in 1800, with a trio of seminarians losing their way and asking an old crone if they can crash at her remote farmhouse. Since she's actually a witch, in the middle of the night, she climbs upon one Brother's back and rides him through the sky with her broom—only to change into a beautiful young maiden after he bashes her to death. Later, he's called to her deathbed to pray and learns she was actually the daughter of a wealthy landowner. And even though he's able to cover up his guilt in the murder, when she passes away, his task is to spend the next three nights locked in a church with the corpse, praying for her soul.

This is when it gets good, kids. Because wait until you see this creepy old cathedral! It's fucking incredible! Full of cobwebs, drippy candles, and sinister icons, this looks more like the ultimate Goth nightclub. Hell, if there was place like this in NYC, it'd make a fortune. More important, on the first night, the corpse rises and begins wandering about in her funeral shroud—while he's saved from her grasp by a magic circle and the cock's crow at dawn. Later, a favorite surreal moment is when she and her coffin begins flying about the church, battering at his invisible circle. And just wait until the final night, when she finally gets around to summoning ALL of her demon hordes, including the monstrous Vj. Damn! This is truly, one of the most weirdest, most surreal monster sequences of all time! I kid you not.

Directed by K. Ierchova and Georgi Kropacheva, and with astounding effects by Alexander Ptuchko, this might only be a scant 73 minutes long, but you'll never forget some of the images this dark 'n' incredible film has to offer.



kills them in the grimmest possible manner (still, he complains to a fresh corpse which he just ass-fucked, "you got my prick all full of shit"). This guy is a real charmer, all right, and never seems to shut up.

If you haven't gotten the point yet, this pic is NOT pleasant. And for its time, it was pretty ballsy to stuff a Nam subtext into the mix. Richler intercuts grainy b&w war footage as he screws these dames; and while this provides a grim, surreal edge, don't go looking for any deeper meaning. Starring Laura Cannon and Tim Long, this powerhouse perversity is better edited and shot than the usual swill; and its only weakness is the tedious X-rated sex scenes, which simply slow down the yarn's more deviant aspects. All in all, a deranged treat that takes the porno pic to a level that few would dare to touch nowadays. If you're a fan of hard-edged exploitation and you haven't watched this yet, what the hell's stopping you?

ISLAND OF DEATH [a.k.a. A Craving for Lust; Devils in Mykonos] (1975).

If you've ever had to endure any of Niko Mastorakis' more recent rotgut, such as *GLITCH!* or *NINJA ACADEMY*, then this early, incredibly demented epic will be a revelation! Hey, the guy has a shred of talent after all! Plus, he does it all—directing, writing, producing, and even co-writing the songs!

Bob Belling and Jane Ryall star as a vacationing couple, Christopher and Celia, who visit a quaint Greek island, rent a house, and initially seem like ordinary, swinging thrill seekers, who enjoy having sex in a phone booth. But all of these rather innocent, initial impressions are shattered when Chris wanders outside one sunny morning, stumbles across a lost lamb, *fucks it*, and then slaughters the poor li'l thing with a handy knife! Yikes! Later, Celia seduces a local house painter, and screws him in a field as Christopher captures a few Kodak moments from afar. And together, they torture the poor guy by nailing his hands to the ground and force feeding him a bucket of paint. If that weren't enough (and it never is, is it?), they invade the home of a gay shop keeper (a "filthy creature"), while a middle-aged slut gets an unexpected golden shower from Chris and winds up decapitated by a bulldozer! There's also a black private eye on their trail, a creepy crime novelist, and a pair of degenerate hippies who rape Celia in her bathtub.

Sure, this is all pretty stupid if you think about it for more than a moment (especially when nobody notices Chris chasing a guy through the middle of town with a sword), but it's also an evil romp that wallows in increasingly-ill carnage, all juxtaposed against its sunny, vacation locale. These two don't simply kill somebody—they also have to burn their face off by lighting a handy aerosol bottle. Ugggh. And I won't even give away some of the more dramatic plot points, including Niko Tsachiridis as an "innocent" shepherd who comes to their aid when on the lam from the cops.

Despite loads of nudity and sex, all of that is overshadowed by the non-stop, unrepentant sadism. And forget any subtlety! This is balls-out depravity for the sake of cheap thrills, as this kill-crazed couple helps God punish the perverse. Or as Christopher puts it, "I am his angel, with a flaming sword, sent to kill dirty worms." As for my favorite edit? How about cutting from brains spattered against a wall, to a close-up of a bowl of breakfast preserves? Without question, this is a four-star exercise in hardened, gratuitous sickness, on par with such Cruelty Classics as *LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT*.

ATROCIOUS TALES OF LOVE AND DEATH [Giallo Napoletano a.k.a. Neapolitan Detective Story] (Luminous; 1978).

Directed by Sergio Corbucci (*DJANGO*), this Italian mystery-comedy has plenty of international starpower. Strangely, it never had a US release, probably because it was deemed too lightweight and silly, and lacked the seamier elements that could've given it crossover potential.

Marcello Mastroianni stars as Raphael, a café musician who is forced to take responsibility for his Pop's gambling debts. In exchange, he blindly agrees to play a streetside serenade on his mandolin, which results in a murdered woman, a high-rise suicide, and poor Raphael hauled in by the (dim-witted) cops. Michel Piccoli enters the picture as Victor Navarro, a respected maestro connected to the suicide. Most important, arthouse sex-

FORCED ENTRY (J4HI; 1972).

This movie is sick! And coming from me, that's saying *plenty*, folks! Because in this ill twist on the usual skinflx of the early-'70s, a brain-damaged Vietnam veteran is tossed into the center ring. The result is a grindhouse *TAXI DRIVER*, with writer-director Helmuth Richler pushing the unsuspecting viewer face-first into his depraved gutter-drama of relentless, humorless, sex 'n' sadism.

After a seemingly-sincere newspaper clipping about vets' "post-Vietnam syndrome" (complete with typos), we move right onto a fresh, corpse-laden crime scene. Our star is a New York City gas station attendant who follows women home after a fill-up. Covered in grease, wearing a softball shirt and cap, and with plenty of wartime stock footage running through his head, he pursues his innocent prey during several different scenarios.

Climbing around local fire escapes, he plays voyeur on a screwing couple (who don't seem to notice the sociopath outside their window, licking his big, shiny knife). He forces a "prima donna" to blow



him at knife-point, telling her he's gonna cut her eyes out and that she's no better than "the gooks in Vietnam." He jumps another gal in her shower and puts a Smith and Wesson to her head until she gives it up. Plus he's really got a grudge against women with "big cars" and "big houses," and after he cums,

kitten Ornella Muti (*THE LAST WOMAN*) is Lucia, who turns up at every subsequent crime, and is also Navarro's daughter-in-law. As Raphael investigates the deaths on his own (purely in order to retrieve his confiscated bankbook), this turns into a convoluted comedy of errors which has this befuddled old fart hung off the side of a building by thugs, locked inside a sinking boat, and dealing with sabotaged car brakes. And let's not forget the New Year's Eve party at the mental hospital, or the dead midget in the freezer.

Confused? Don't worry, because this unfathomably complex mystery actually has a solution, involving blackmail, buried secrets, and all the usual last minute revelations. Still, the best parts of the flick involve its bizarre throwaways---such as when Mastroianni steals a wig and dress from a transvestite in order to go incognito (as an ugly dame with a mustache). Better still, while at a disco, Navarro's horny young wife stuffs a compact full of cocaine under Raphael's nose, which turns him into a drooling sex fiend, babbling about spaghetti and meatballs (?).

Happily, the cast is in the proper mood. Muti is as sultry as ever (but maintains a strictly PG wardrobe), while Mastroianni gives a far-from-subtle performance as a total moron who keeps sticking his nose where it doesn't belong. And when he gets all puppy-eyed over Muti, who's 30+ years his junior, well, it's rather pathetic. Briskly paced and laced with pleasantly twisted moments, this is EuroFluff at its most ingratiating.

THE WEIRD WORLD OF LSD (SWV; 1967).

Attention, all of you impressionable kids! According to this alarmist crock-o-shit, LSD "destroys reasoning capacities of the mind," and is hitting America's youth "with the awesome power of a medieval plague." Well, as far as I'm concerned, this certifiable laugh-riot only made me want to drop a tab and groove to its idiocy, which promises to give innocent viewers insight into the effects (not to mention, *side effects*) of ACID!

Our first glimpse of a typical acidhead is a trip in itself, as a young guy lays motionless on a couch, and suddenly has to "fly a giant bird" by wildly flapping his arms as a badly drawn chicken is superimposed over him. Next thing you know, he's looking at the cosmos, and winds up dead on his living room carpet! Cool! From there on, this is a 75-minute version of those asinine anti-drug flicks that older readers (like myself) were subjected to in high school. Thankfully, it's goofy enough and chock full of trippy visuals, so any visiting stoners will get a chuckle, despite its two-ton proselytizing.

Director Robert Ground really lays on the scare tactics, and the result is one of the great, unintentional comedies of the acid genre, armed with a bunch of 'real-life' mini-dramas, as various folks flip out. An average secretary drops acid to escape her mundane life, and plays with cats until she thinks she is one. A fat 'n' lonely art dealer hallucinates he's stuffing his face at a feast. Two girlfriends trip and end up in a barroom catfight, while another slices off her own clothes in the middle of a bar, and dances in her undies on a tabletop. Oh, the horrors!

Loaded with bug-eyed, REEFER MADNESS-style emoting, this film gives its actors a license to go nuts. There's also a cringe-inducing, free-jazz soundtrack; a couple of 'sexy' (ha!) dance numbers; and (most important) a deliciously over-ripe narration ("Under LSD, veins on your arm become an intense, blue mountain range. One's eye can be seen to grow, until it fills the room and the walls close in on it, until it is squashed.").

The moral of this film is that if you take LSD, ten seconds later you'll be freaking out and writhing in a private hell full of rubbery-faced monsters. Of course, this only brings up the important question: How come I never experienced any of this shit?! I feel ripped off! I never "became an indestructible God" or accidentally chopped someone up with a butcher knife! And I certainly never "plunged into hellish psychosis," never to return (although that might be debatable to some). All in all, a hallucinogenic classic that's impossible to sit through if you're straight, yet impossible to forget if you're properly medicated.

DRILLER (Blackest Heart; 1984).

How could I pass up this malicious porno parody, which takes on Michael Jackson's career? *I'm there!* Laced with wicked humor and minimal technical finesse, "The Sensational Mr. J" (there's an overstatement) plays this megastar, who has guys proclaiming "He's not bad...For a faggot," and gets gals wet between the legs from his pathetic, on-stage posturing.

One example of the guy's effect on the fairer sex is Louise (chunky Taija Rae), a drooling (white) fan whose geeky boyfriend Dan is a loser in the sack. Then it segues to Louise alone in her bedroom, suddenly finding herself trapped in a hilariously cut-rate rip-off of Jackson's Thriller video, as zombies invade her room, dance about and tear off her clothes. When Mr. J turns into a werewolf, the transformation comes complete with a foot-long fake cock that spins about like a drill bit and spurts black sperm. Later, he drags Louise to his castle dungeon of torture, fake cobwebs and fornicating zombies, for a gang bang finale. The entire sorry enterprise clocks in at 52 minutes.

The sex scenes are unpleasant. The Big Concert numbers look like they were filmed in someone's basement, and when his sad entourage of dancers begin gyrating, it's like a retarded version of Alvin Ailey. The sound-alike tunes by Willy Georgia ("Hot Star", "Driller") are almost as wretched as The King of Poop, er, Pop's originals; the director is attributed to "Joyce James"; and I probably make all this hardcore nonsense seem funnier than it actually is. To put it mildly, it reeks. Nevertheless, whoever made this slop also had balls to go up against this real-life, pasty-faced, pedophilic freak and his army of lawyers. Hmmm, maybe *that's* why the movie is so difficult to locate nowadays.

THE MINDBLOWERS (SWV; 1968).

This Cosmos Films release from director-writer Harlan Renvok is an idiotic grindhouse sex-pic, armed with a ridiculous concept and various sexual combinations. M/F, M/M, F/F, B/W, you name it! There's even some choice 42nd Street footage (ahh, you can almost smell the urine!), as well as a hippie couple that checks out a lesbian film-within-a-film which involves toe-sucking(?).

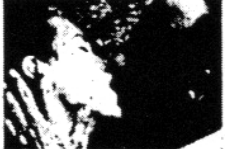



Hal Friend stars as The Professor, a sleazy Doc who recruits a motley bunch of experimental volunteers, with applicants such as a couple sailors and a long-haired pair (which includes Warhol-perennial Eric Emerson). The Doc (nicknamed "Wolfie") is your typical crackpot, complete with a horrible mock-German accent and a tendency to fondle the bare breasts of female patients. Picking four disparate volunteers (a swabby named Randolph, the queer Derek, a sextop named Betty, and the prudish Lorna), Wolfie explains that they're going to have their sexual "brainwaves" recorded. But a monkey wrench is tossed into the experiment when the tapes are mislabeled by the Prof's mute assistant, Dumkoff, and their brainwaves wind up exchanged.

As Wolfie watches via a one-way mirror, he puts the horny sailor and the nympho in bed together, only to have her turn into a Bible-thumping virgin. And when gay Derek pays a visit to her bedside, he's suddenly transformed into a hetero-love-machine, thanks to Dr. Quack. Seaman Randy, of course, suddenly gets horny for his longtime Navy bud, and nearly rapes the guy. Meanwhile, uptight Lorna turns into a raunch-o-phile to her beau. The ending is one long orgy featuring a near-record number of pasty, intertwined limbs.

Is this sexy? Not as far as I was concerned. The movie is a patchwork, even by the usual sexploitation standards. For example, in the middle of the already complicated yarn, we suddenly take a long break for a sex scene between two totally new characters—a white punk and a black chick—on a barroom floor. In addition, some of the actors are NOT into the proceedings, such as Sailor Randy, who looks about as comfortable in bed with a woman as he would be having a root canal. Still, it's only 68 minutes long, and proves just how goofy the old Deuce pics could get. Co-starring Ingrid Superstar, plus amusing pseudonyms such as "Nanook North" and "Tanus Root."

ADULT ENTERTAINMENT

DRUG CRAZY

THRILLS

TAKE A TRIP THROUGH THE WEIRD WORLD of LSD SHOCKING UNBELIEVEABLE

TERRY TESSEM ★
YOLANDA MARINO ★
ANN LINDSAY ★

See the Truth

RIPPED FROM TODAY'S HEADLINES!

THE STRANGE ONE (Columbia TriStar; 1957).

Directed by Jack Garfein and based on Calder Willingham's novel, "End As a Man," this was promoted as the first movie acted entirely by the illustrious Actors' Studio. Originally a Broadway play, with the same director and cast, there's also gritty photography by award-winner Burnett Guffey (FROM HERE TO ETERNITY), while scripter Willingham is best known for writing hits like THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI. Yet despite all of its A-level names, this is pure B-movie territory. Stark, exploitative, mean-spirited swill, with plenty of talent to bring it to life (plus, a few stinkers in the mix).

Set in a southern military college, Ben Gazzara made his film debut as the campus' head slimebag, Jocko De Paris, who rousts two freshman in the middle of the night for some hazing. Sporting a wild, Hunter S, Thompson-style shirt and cigarette holder, Jocko forces the pair to help cheat drunken, redneck cadet James Olson at cards. Of course, these two lower classmen turn out to be goody-two-shoes that want to put a stop to Jocko's shenanigans. They're played by George Peppard as the commandant's white-bread son and creepy Arthur Storch as a whiny, Christian geek (who never seems to unclench his teeth, and badly needs 'em crammed down his throat). Later, when Peppard gets beaten to a bloody pulp by Jocko, he's made to look drunk and gets booted from the college. Will anyone rat out Gazzara and his flunky, Pat Hingle? Since this is the '50s, the answer is (an unfortunate) yes. Still, it's pleasantly subversive most of the way, thanks to Gazzara's ripe performance.

It's no surprise that Gazzara's career took off after this pic, with TV's RUN FOR YOUR LIFE. His Jocko is the American ideal of two-bit sadism, and the fact that he's most at home in this military environment is no big surprise. See him abuse a sycophantic cadet named Cockroach (who's writing a hero worship novel about Jocko) in the shower! He then tries to get Storch laid, even though the thought of being with a woman turns this geek to Jello.

If it sounds like there's a bit of homoerotic subtext here, NO SHIT! Originally Cockroach and Storch were more explicitly gay, but three minutes were cut by the Production Code Administration, because of its "sexual perversion." In its translation from the page to the screen, much of the social commentary is missing, but if you're in the mood for some rip-roaring brutality, this is sure to keep you amused.

**THE SWAMP OF THE RAVENS** [El Pantano de los Cuervos] (Video Dungeon; 1973).

You can tell something's fishy when you pop in a tape, and it turns out to be a badly-dubbed Spanish production, lensed in Ecuador, with Greek subtitles, and is directed by Manuel Cano (using the pseudonym Michael Cannon). It's an international hodgepodge, all right, and the plot is the same old shit. For the umpteenth time, we meet a Mad Doctor (Raymond Oliver) who is convinced "death is not an irreversible fact" and likes to experiment on minutes-old corpses. He then dumps these botched subjects (whole, or in

pieces) into the swamp just outside of his laboratory shack. That explains the nearby tree full of ravens, awaiting their next fresh meal.

When he isn't in this makeshift lab, our suave slimebag has his share of romantic problems, with long-suffering girlfriend Simone (Marcia Bichette) ditching him in order to run back to her previous beau, a talentless nightclub singer. Since the Doc is barred from obtaining any legit cadavers for his research, he acquires them in any possible way. When a leprous patient commits suicide, he becomes a 'volunteer'. If fresh blood is needed, there's always a handy prostitute to drain. He even kidnaps Simone from the airport when she tries to split, and straps her to his lab table, naked. Meanwhile, a porcine cop (longtime character actor Fernando Sancho) takes on the case when a severed hand is discovered by neighborhood urchins.

Despite a little cheesecake and gore (including a real autopsy), for much of the time this is slow-paced drivel. At least it picks up in the final half-hour, when the Doc's patients rise from the dead, his zombie manservant immolates himself with gasoline, and there's even a bit of lab table necrophilia when the Dr. can't keep his hands off the dead Simone. Still, this is crude stuff, and exactly what you'd expect from the director who brought us VOODOO BLACK EXORCIST and several Spanish Tarzan knock-offs.

TOAD WARRIORS (1997).

Hiding under his Maximo T. Bird pseudonym, director Donald Jackson returns to his HELL COMES TO FROGTOWN roots with the third entry in this ever-diminishing sci-fi series. And while the first FROGTOWN was good for a laugh, this flick is a genuine embarrassment, thanks to its ultra-paltry budget and the type of ineptitude that rarely shows up outside of public access TV.

Scott Shaw stars (along with his flowing tresses and handy samurai sword) as Max Hell, a desert mercenary of the future, who spends much of his time fending off those pesky, post-apocalyptic Toad People. The plot has to do with a stolen serum which can save the whole world from turning into amphibians, but primarily, this is fueled by passable action sequences (since Shaw can actually perform his own martial arts stunts) and half-baked supporting clods, including a trenchcoated toad named Humphrey Bullfrog and a scientist babe working with frog DNA.

Amongst the supporting cast, Ex-Ed Wood supporting player (and current-day fan convention perennial) Conrad Brooks turns up as a swamp farmer, searching for his lost (hand-puppet) gator. Decades after PLAN NINE, he *still* hasn't learned a damned thing about acting—which, in this instance, puts him in good company. Worst of all is hammy Joe Estevez as Mr. Big; and if I didn't know that he was Martin Sheen's brother, I would've guessed the producer's piss-drunk uncle had accidentally stumbled on-camera.

Slapdash and stupid, the film also has enough moments of self-deprecating humor that you realize the cast and crew were fully aware of its one-take incompetence. It's also difficult to buy into their post-Frog Wars scenario when fight sequences have a busy rush-hour highway in the background. For a final pissar, after 80+ minutes, the movie suddenly stops, with a "To Be Continued..." credit (almost as if they ran out of film stock and had to go back to their day jobs at Starbucks before they could finish it). What's next? FROGTOWN RESURRECTION? Thank you, but I'd rather take gas.

ALL OF THEM WITCHES [Sobrenatural] (1995).

Normally, when someone mentions Mexican horror movies, you figure it's gotta have at least one masked wrestler in the cast. Well, this lush psychodrama is an exception to that long-standing rule of thumb. The English title is taken from the Scrabble scene in ROSEMARY'S BABY (which is seen on a TV), and director Daniel Gruener is obviously striving for the same overall effect. While he doesn't match Polanski's classic, this definitely has its nightmarish moments.

Susana Zabaleta stars as Dolores, a pretty young housewife who hears her neighbor/friend Eva murdered in the apartment hallway, just outside Dolores' front door. Days later, she's still reeling from the terrifying event (with dim-witted hubbie Alejandro Tommasi trying to cheer her up by renting BENJI), and becomes increasingly paranoid after a series of odd occurrences. She discovers a cloth pouch filled with a strange plant; and when she shows her husband the packet, he nearly vomits at its odor—while she can't smell anything at all. Then, when Dolores goes to the store to replace a shorted-out electrical socket, she learns that Eva bought the same thing the day she was killed. And when she's finally convinced to visit a shrink, this Doc turns out to be the creepiest of the lot.

Sneaking into Eva's apartment, Dolores finds a scrap of paper with an address, and winds up at the candle-lit dungeon-workplace of Madame Endor, who tries to save her from the witchcraft she has fallen prey to. Let's not forget the bald stranger lurking outside her apartment window; mystical powders that can take away all free will; and flashes of squirm-inducing imagery (such as, in the middle of a hysterical foot chase, noticing that your

fingernails are falling off).

Obviously, this is no cut-and-dry horror movie. Though often too low-key for its own good, the film's strength lies in its arresting visuals and disquieting camera placement, which are as strong as in any Argento fare. Equally important, Zabaleta offers up a performance that's alternately sympathetic, unnerving, and reminded me of Isabelle Adjani's riveting turn in *POSSESSION*. Gruener doesn't go for easy scares or gory set pieces (which will probably turn off some viewers), but he certainly knows how to shoot a film, twist your expectations, and evoke a genuine stench of the supernatural.

butchered before your eyes. Then we meet shoemaker Lee Kang, who's deep in debt due to his gambling, and while Niece Sherry begs him to stop, a black-masked, chortling fiend knocks her out and chops her Uncle into li'l chunks—then graphically stuffs the pieces into a Hefty bag. From then on, it's the usual mix of generic cop filler and mushy melodrama.

It seems that the sinister, wheelchair-bound Kuen is behind a ring of urban savages who're killing and skinning folks, tanning the flesh, and turning them into ladies' shoes. Unfortunately, much of the movie is spent on idiotic subplots, such as Sherry's jealousy of her cousin Tien's new girlfriend (which leads to a blouse-rending catfight). Or when the shop's facially-scathed worker, Wang, abducts Sherry, drinks the blood of a handy white mouse, takes an electric hedge trimmer to a nearby corpse, and makes her fondle the body parts! Of course, in order to keep the audience from nodding off, you've got to tack on gratuitous sex scenes, like Sherry's masturbation fantasy.

Are you in search of depth, character, or originality? Forget it! This is nothing but overwrought, under-cooked thrills, with a sprinkling of low-brow action. Still, Wang is certainly the happiest maniac I've seen in a while, and it's always refreshing to watch a man who loves his job! Badly acted and directed, it aims, shoots and scores at only the lowest level of exploitation.

MADE IN BRITAIN (1983) and MEANTIME (1983).

Now that Tim Roth has acquired marquee value in the US, let's take a look at two of his earliest, most caustic performances. More important, when watched back-to-back, you can't believe that this was the same actor in such opposite roles. He's virtually unrecognizable, and that's high praise indeed.

In *MADE IN BRITAIN*, Roth plays Trevor, an unemployed, 16-year-old skinhead, who's presently institutionalized for theft and battery. But while a panel of 'experts' are trying to assess what should be done with this social miscreant, Trevor decides to snort a sandwich bag full of glue and go on a joy(less) ride with his new black roommate. Later, instead of trying to get a job, he

prefers to toss a rock through the employment office window. This guy is a real piece of work, all right—the type of petulant smart-ass who misses his free lunch because he's too busy stealing a car, and throws a temper tantrum when they won't reopen the kitchen. Of course, everyone around him is a "wanker," including one social worker who tries to help him channel his anger through...demolition derby? Maybe it was a good idea, but Trevor'll never know, because he'll always screw up any opportunity to do something with his life. He'd rather be breaking into the case files and taking a piss on them.

The unbending, full-of-shit Trevor is difficult to sympathize with, but it's a powerful performance nevertheless. Roth is intense as hell, with a genuine "Fuck Authority" swagger and sneer, while acclaimed director Alan Clarke (*SCUM*) and scripter David Leland keep the story tight, tough, and only 73 minutes long. Add some hard-driving music by The Exploited and gritty camerawork by Chris Menges (*BLOODY KIDS*), and you get another bleak portrait of youth, as only the Brits can dish it out.

Meanwhile, *MEANTIME* is a downbeat, working-class drama set in London's East End. It's also an early effort by Mike Leigh, who directed and "devised" this pic a decade before he was recognized on this side of the Atlantic for arthouseers like *NAKED* and *SECRETS AND LIES*. Nowadays, one of its main attractions is the amazing young cast.

Phil Daniels (*QUADROPHENIA*) and Roth star as brothers; the first, a burgeoning thug/lazy-about named Mark, while younger sibling Colin is a nearly retarded tag-along. Their relationship is the heart of this tale, and this is a major change of pace for Roth, who looks like a stereotypical geek, complete with taped-up eye glasses and ragged, home-sliced haircut. Indeed, their whole family is a bunch of screw-ups, with both Mark and Dad on unemployment, and everyone bickering over some idiotic thing.

Even when Colin is given a job by his aunt, painting her house, Dad bitches, Colin gets lost on the way there, and the pissed-off Mark coerces him into ditching it. Instead, Colin ends up with a shaved head (in preparation for the preceding film, perhaps?). A young Gary Oldman also turns up as Coxy, one of Mark's skinhead mates, who drags slow-witted Colin off for some casual abuse (like shoving the poor guy in a broom closet). Even back then, Oldman was a scene-stealer, and it makes you wish he weren't homogenizing this primal rage nowadays in order to play villains like Dr. Smith in the upcoming, big-screen *LOST IN SPACE*.

Leigh doesn't shove the drama into our faces, preferring to keep it honest and low-key, with hopelessly realistic characters who spend most of their lives sitting on their asses. This thick slice of life(lessness) is a tad slow-paced, but extremely well-acted and worth a peek—though I wouldn't suggest watching it if life has been getting you down recently.

NO ONE PERMITTED TO LEAVE* BEFORE THE END

Close your eyes, shut your ears or scream - but if you flee the blood-chilling terror, you will not be re-admitted until after the final fright! *Except in an emergency.

SEE IT AT YOUR OWN RISK!



SCHOOLGIRLS IN CHAINS [a.k.a. Let's Play Dead] (1973).

This trash gem comes from director-writer Don Jones (who later helmed such wonderfully-titled pics as *THE LOVE BUTCHER*), and revels in all of the vile values that made rural drive-in movies great. Filled with nekkid women in peril and retarded deviants, it's a White Trash treat that ranks right up there with *THE CANDY SNATCHERS* for misogynistic '70s swill.

So, is it recommended? You betcha! And you know you're in good hands the instant a sexy young gal with car trouble is picked up by silky-voiced Frank (Gary Kent, who's also credited as production manager). Soon, she's on a one-way trip to visit "Mama" and the rest of her slimeball brood—and into the cellar she goes, joining two other women they've got under lock and key.

Living in a rural home, chock full of dolls, brother John (John Stoglin) is a balding half-wit in farm overalls, who puts women on a leash and "wants to play." Then, when they try to flee, Frank is quick to blast 'em with a handy shotgun and plant 'em in their garden. Meanwhile, their domineering Mama is only seen from behind as she forces her boys to keep these girls captive; but in the flashbacks, this old gal is a hoot. She forces Frank to give her 'chest massages'; drives away his fiancée with news of their Oedipal relations; and teaches them that "young pretty girls are all evil." We also see "naughty boy" John playing Doctor, which entails examining bare breasts and administering a shot in the ass to one of their captives. Even more telling is when Frank tries to rape the imprisoned Ginger, only to wind up a whimpering mess. Don't look for much sympathy with their nubile captives either, because these ditzs have less self-survival instinct than Sylvia Plath.

Not a whole lot happens, but it's *how* it happens that really matters. A little slow in spots, this has that all-too-rare, scummy edge that makes you want to take a long shower afterward. The cast is surprisingly good, especially the two wacko brothers; with Kent nicely restrained and Stoglin striving for the heights of low-IQ'ed wackiness. There's also Ron Garcia's demented camerawork, which captures the proper mood for this vile, sadistic rotgut.

HORRIBLE HIGH HEELS (Video Dungeon; 1996).

Since the credits of this cut-rate Category III Hong Kong flick were in their original language, I had to trust the video box that Chow Cheng was the director. And though it lists martial arts stars Dick Wei (*PROJECT A*) and Billy Chow (*FIST OF LEGEND*) as primary cast members, they only turn up for throwaway roles; as well as Shing Fui-On (misspelled as "Sing Fui Ann"), who played the Big Boss in *THE KILLER*—here seen briefly as the crippled Shoe Boss. But since the box's plot synopsis was totally wrong, I wouldn't bet any money on these facts...or even the title.

You know you're in sick hands when the opening features a cow being

CHUBASCO (VSoM; 1968).

Does the name Christopher Jones sound familiar? Probably not. But back in the late '60s, he was the Hollywood Heartthrob of the Month, with starring roles in flicks such as *WILD IN THE STREETS* and *THREE IN THE ATTIC*. For a brooding flash-in-the-pan, Jones wasn't half bad, and in this occasionally groovy youth drama, he teamed up with then-wife Susan Strasberg (in the wake of her counter-culture stints in *THE TRIP* and *PSYCH-OUT*).

It starts off cool enough, as a beach party is crashed by some generic bikers—followed by the police. Of course, when Chubasco (Jones) socks one of the cops, he's hauled in, along with his girlfriend Bunny (typically-vapid Strasberg). To make matters more tense, her brawny, quick-tempered pop (Richard Egan) nearly strangles this Rebel Without a Career in court. To escape his legal hassles, this "professional beach bum" signs onto a tuna clipper, skippered by Simon Oakland, and after leaving Bunny with a ring and a promise to return, off we go on a big, boring sea adventure. Oh sure, the photography is pretty as heck, but not much happens, except for some well-lensed tuna fishing footage.

This brash young hothead doesn't make friends easily, but he's got a natural ability of spotting tuna, and soon links up with an old coot named Captain Benito, who becomes a surrogate father. OK, get your insulin ready, kids—because just as Bunny and he get secretly hitched (and since cheap melodrama follows Chubasco around like dogshit on his shoe), Benito croaks on their wedding day!

Then, in the dumbest coincidence, Chubasco is accidentally hired onto a fishing boat owned by his new, unwary father-in-law! Ooops!

This has to be one of the dumbest, yet dead serious scripts in recent memory (courtesy of director-writer Allen H. Miner). The drama is so thick you can't breathe, everyone acts with blind conviction, and it's always on the precipice of unintentional camp. In his spare time, executive producer William (CANNON) Conrad also co-wrote the end-credits song "To Love You"; while Ann Sothern pops up as Angela, a sea-town madam. Most important, this movie proves that a little manly work, the love of a good woman, and the untimely death of a close relative will turn an unruly kid into a man. Ahh, don't you love old fashioned Hollywood bullshit?

DECEPTION OF A GENERATION (Blackest Heart; 198?).

If you're a fan of Crackpot Christian Crapola, this video is the motherload. In fact, I haven't laughed this much since Ronald Reagan's assassination



Against the background of the great tuna fleet comes the excitement, adventure and romance of CHUBASCO...

attempt. Essentially, this feature length diatribe consists of several episodes of *THE EAGLE'S NEST*, a god-fearing public access-level show that wants to save society from Satan, with host Gary Greenwald sitting in his overstuffed, plaid chair babbling about the Bible, as you see his suburban neighbors strolling past his front-room window. In other words, his is a decidedly low-tech pulpit.

But if you thought Greenwald was a total tool, wait until his guest Phil Phillips announces that 80% of all children's cartoons deal with the occult! Yes, this (unintentionally) hilarious video exposes an insidious "attack upon our society," in the form of Scooby-Doo, He-Man, and even (shudder) My Little Pony! As evidence, they take one particular Scooby-Doo cartoon ("13 Ghosts of Scooby-Doo") which features witches and a Vincent Price-voiced magician, and is therefore, sneaking Satanism into Christian homes. In addition, *HE-MAN AND THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE* features "occultic, demonic spirits" and stories of having their "minds transformed" and "programmed to evil." Better still, Phillips tells a shocking story of a little boy who, after church, screamed "He-Man is more powerful than Jesus!" Oh no! It's "destroying our children!"

Of course, there are even more ludicrous examples, since Greenwald and Phillips believe children are too stupid to understand the difference between a fictional character and reality. (It's too bad they

never learned the same when it came to The Bible.) *DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS* is a "mind-bending" game of "demon spirits", with spiritual forces literally inhabiting the pieces? E.T. is a "camouflage occult movie" with homosexual influences? Even better, *THE SMURFS* are blue, thus representing the dead, and carry yet another queer overtone!

Obviously, these two guys are one french fry short of a Happy Meal, and every time Phillips has some new 'revelation' (like the fact that *MY LITTLE PONY* is actually a Satanic unicorn!), Greenwald gets "wiped out" by this info. Of course, along the way, Phillips admits that he came up with this toy 'n' cartoon crusade during a 14-day fast, when God spoke to him. Personally, one Grand Slam Breakfast at Denny's would've put those hallucinations to rest and saved him a hell of a lot of wasted time. Because, in truth, the only thing all of these '80s cartoons have in common is that they all suck. Primarily, I feel sorry for these guys' kids. They must be so fucked up and repressed that they'll be smack-shooting runaways by the time they're twelve-years-old.





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FILM FLOTSAM

READERS' RECOMMENDATIONS

Note: Please query me with your ideas before sending in completed reviews.

GERARD ALEXANDER; Australia.

TWO FEMALE SPIES WITH FLOWERED PANTIES (1978). For a cheap Disco/Women in Prison crossover flick, you can't beat this Jess Franco aberration. Starring his beau, Lina Romay (BARE BREASTED COUNTESS, ILSA THE WICKED WARDEN) and Nadine Pascal (vet of too many skinflicks to mention here), it details their torments as two prisoners who go undercover in the Canary Islands by posing as Nightclub strippers. You see, this porn actress by the name of Adriana (played with an intense blank stare by nymphet Muriel Montossey) has been kidnapped by a group led by a lady who controls all with the aid of her hypnotic Opal Ring. She has supplied Adriana to a tycoon, who naturally has his way with her, often. Those with a keen eye for sadism will be relieved to find such delights as cigarette to the breast inquisitions, knife to the crotch inquiries as well as the usual beatings. Fashion fetishists can ogle Ms. Romay, her body tearing at the seams of a tiny silver bikini, with matching silver swimcap. There's a terrifically staged battle between a hippy commune and the baddies for a suitably ridiculous finale.

THREE FANTASTIC SUPERMEN (1967). This one's for you folks that love the 3 Stooges, and I make no apologies for my taste. Directed by Frank Kramer (smells like an Italian Pseudonym), this superhero spoof succeeds in its attempts to be superstupid and yet lovable at the same time. Regular Pastaland favorites Brad Harris and Tony Kendall are joined by the AMAZING mute talents of Nick Jordan. You see, he only speaks with sounds approximating the voice of Running Board, the classic rodent from the GoGo Gophers show. Clad in bullet-proof scarlet costumes, armed with ball bearing yo-yos, and transported by their remote controlled car, they are tricked into helping the FBI steal from a new Middle East nation. Their home base is a Crime School for girls, where they are hounded for their affections. There is also the mystery of the Reproducer, which can copy anything and is being hidden on an island private school. The sets are colorful enough, and the acrobatic endeavors of our heroes make one long for the eventual return of slapstick to the cinema.

ESCALOFRIO [DON'T PANIC] (1977). This Spanish horror, written and directed by Carlos Puerto, begins nicely enough with a black mass at which the lady on the altar is impregnated. Fine, you think, a variation of ROSEMARY'S BABY perhaps? Wellllll, no. The next scene introduces Annie and Andy, a couple who are accosted on the road by Bruno and Mary. Bruno claims to be an old college pal of Andy's, but he can't recall. Even so, our young couple accept an invitation to join Bruno and Mary at their home, for old times' sake. At night, Annie and Andy are soon bewitched into joining Bruno and Mary in a Satanic Orgy. Ahh, the 70's. Anyway, Annie is a little perturbed to find Mary slurping up some raw meat in the kitchen and her nightmare wherein she is raped by a growling, snarling Bruno doesn't make her any more confident about her new friends. I don't want to reveal the shocks that follow, but if you have the patience, you won't be disappointed.

GREG WALTERS; Tucson, AZ.

CEMETERY OF TERROR (1984). Here's a Mexican horror movie that copies THE EVIL DEAD. A walking corpse, who suspiciously looks like George Eastman, terrorizes a group of teenagers in an old house. He's looking for a book that will grant him everlasting life. Filmed in Texas, this popped up on one of my local Spanish stations a couple of years ago. Some of the plot nuances were lost on me in the Spanish language version I saw, but it does star Hugo Stiglitz (CITY OF THE WALKING DEAD) and Rene Cardona III. **LAST FOXTROT IN BURBANK (1973).** Charles Band's first film is a real surprise. A softcore takeoff on LAST TANGO IN PARIS, this actually has subtitles and French dialogue, to make you think you're actually watching a serious French art flick!! The rest of the film is the standard softcore grind and groan. What a riot.

ZERO IN THE UNIVERSE (1967). Two disembodied souls travel through time in various guises, in this interesting experimental feature made in Amsterdam. At various times, they're disguised as Napoleon, and as a future space traveler. Similar in some ways to Anthony Balch's BIZARRE, but without the nudity. American George Moore, who stars and directs, later went to West Germany and made many more avant-garde films there.

RAINBOW BRIDGE (1971). Once upon a time, this was one of the most dreaded rock films, making the midnight movie rounds during the late '70s, when I first saw it. A group of cosmic people gather at a mansion on Maui, to discuss various subjects, such as drugs, religion, and the meaning of life in general. Jimi Hendrix is top billed, but he only appears in a couple of short segments, and a heavily edited concert towards the end. The best parts for me in viewing the uncut version on video are, besides the concert segment, the copious hash smoking, and Jimi shooting the owner of the mansion while making a ridiculous speech on the environment. The director was Chuck Wein, who usually made movies for the Andy Warhol factory. The soundtrack is better than the movie, if you can find it.

LA FEE SANGUINAIRE (1968). Roland Letham, Belgium's foremost surrealist, made this crazy mixture of surrealism and horror, which has an anarchist castrating world leaders, and keeping their members in jars. Ouch!! A vampire lady also appears, kills victims with a straight razor, and inexplicably lives in a barrel?? Doesn't make much sense to me, but it is gory for the period, and has the added bonus of writer and sometime star, Jean-Pierre Bouyxou as an angel.

MIDI MINUIT (1970). Two students visiting an isolated country house in the south of France run into a killer, who rips his victims apart with an iron-clawed glove, a la Freddy Krueger. A sort of homage to the long running French fantasy and horror magazine Midi-Minuit Fantastique, it contains the images that made the magazine famous amongst its readers; sex, sadism, and mystery. The only familiar face in the cast is Daniel Emilfork, who starred as the devil in THE DEVIL'S NIGHTMARE.



PINK FLOYD IN POMPEII (1971). Just before Pink Floyd made the big time with "Dark Side Of The Moon", this TV documentary chronicles an excellent performance at the deserted amphitheatre in Pompeii. Also included as a bonus is footage of the band at work on Dark Side in the studio. This is a good primer for those people who've only heard Dark Side and beyond, including as it does, the best of their early material; "Echoes", "Careful With That Axe", "Eugene", et cetera. Best Quote: "Where would Rock 'n' Roll be without feedback."

SEVEN WOMEN FOR SATAN (1974). This takeoff on THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME was banned in its original form in France, and was released a couple of years later, severely cut. This time we have the son of Count Zaroff carrying on dad's tradition, with horrifying effects for all persons involved. Michel Lemoine, actor turned director, was in any number of films by directors as diverse as Sacha Guitry and Jesus Franco. He later turned to hardcore, with a series of films starring Marilyn Monroe lookalike Olinka, Howard Vernon and Joelle Coeur (LES DEMONIQUES).

LA DAMA EN LA MUERTE (1946). Here's your chance to see a horror film from Chile. This is a pretty straightforward telling of the "Suicide Club" by Robert Louis Stevenson. If you've seen CURSE OF THE STONE HAND, this is the best part of that Jerry Warren camp classic. Pretty creepy in some spots, it was directed by Carlos Hugo Christensen, who was still cranking them out over 30 years later in Brazil.

HENRY COVERT; Charlotte, NC.

SEX PERILS OF PAULETTE (SWV; 1965). "The WILD get-togethers of a SEX conscious generation!" Sez the tagline for this melodramatic romp from the Queen of Sleaze Doris Wishman, infamous for brilliant B&W opuses like INDECENT DESIRES and less inspired color fiascos like the Chesty Morgan flicks (surely the first time sexploitation audiences demanded the star keep her shirt ON!). This one, thankfully, falls in the former camp—a trashy affair with all of Doris' hallmarks: vertiginous camerawork with as much attention paid to inanimate objects as her gorgeous actresses (who do all their household chores in their slinky underwear); a swingin' jazz-inflected soundtrack; async sound (in this case, the bad dubbing is mostly replaced by voice-overs from "Mati Hara" [Wishman]); and a story loaded with orgies, mistreated women, and gobs of bathos. Paulette (Anna Karol) arrives in New York hellbent on becoming an actress, moves in with slutty Tracy (the exquisite Darlene Bennett), and falls for a sincere square named Allen. After rebuffing horny theatrical agent Sam Riller (Wishman staple Sam Stewart), Paulette hits the skids and follows Tracy into hooking, her interminable self-pity trip finally driving off earnest Al. With on-screen sleaze offset by sledgehammer moralizing (courtesy the cheesy narration), Doris gets to have her cake and eat it too. And you just know it's Wishman at the helm when the opening exchange between Paulette and Allen seems to be taking place between a squirrel and a tree!

KIKAIDA (Cool Stuff; 1973-74). Between the '60s BATMAN show and THE INCREDIBLE HULK and WONDER WOMAN in the mid-to-late '70s, America had a big yawning gap in the TV superhero sweepstakes. Not so Japan. Not only did they bludgeon us with ULTRAMAN reruns, but in their native country, ground out dozens of delirious hero-fests, replete with rubber monsters, surreal scenarios, and crazed cheapo effects bordering on Asian dada ballet. INAZUMAN; RAINBOWMAN; umpteen incarnations of the mighty KAMEN RIDER (raped and dismembered these days on US TV, Power Rangers-style)...but KIKAIDA may blow 'em all away for sheer demented fun! A psychedelic android, blue on one side; red on the other; with bug eyes and the red half of his head partially transparent so you can see his groovy light-up circuitry, Kikaida rides a motorcycle (don't all Japanese superheroes?) and, in his downtime turns into Jiro, a traveling guitar player (!). When tackling the monsters and androids sent by the main baddie Professor Gill, he first takes them off-guard with his guitar playing (it would help if he tuned up), then Jiro transforms into Kikaida and throws down with the monsters, all of whom are named for a color and an animal, i.e. Gray Rhino King, Yellow Jaguar, Orange Ant, Blue Buffalo, etc. Kikaida's only real weakness is his "incomplete conscience circuit", which makes him susceptible to this flute Prof. Gill plays (?). Y'know, these shows make you wonder if their producers weren't subject

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to some massive acid dosing. The next time some lame Tinseltown hack produces a superhero flick (and there are plenty choking the multiplexes this year), they should ask for some of what these guys were taking...

GARGOYLES (1972). I saw this made-for-TV movie twice as a kid, and it's haunted me ever since. Anthropologist Cornel Wilde takes daughter Jennifer Salt (SISTERS) to Mexico and uncovers an ancient race of gargoyles. The main thing I remember is how incredible blaxploitation-vest Bernie Casey was as the leader of the gargoyles. Casey's amazing makeup (an early Stan Winston job) made him the closest to Satan himself a generation a preschoolers would get to see on TV. The human characters just weren't as memorable, and it was easy to sympathize with the gargoyles (we even got to see a "cute" little baby gargoyle hatching), though I can't recall exactly what their motives were (it's been 20 years!). All I know is, the images of those descending gargoyles will be clawed

onto my backbrain forever. Does anyone have a copy of this on video?

MEAN MOTHER (Xenon; 1973). Independent-International, the late schlock-peddler Al Adamson's production company, apparently recut a charmingly inept slice of Euro-blaxploitation originally called A GUY NAMED JOE under this moniker for US drive-in consumption. Co-directed by Leon Klimovsky (responsible for what some consider Paul Naschy's prime werewolf opus LA NOCHE DE WALPURGIS) and Albert Victor, this details the divergent paths taken by two Army buddies after going AWOL from both 'Nam and the cartel they run drugs for. One's a brother, Beauregard Jones (Clifton Brown), who steals plates from a Spanish counterfeiting operation and becomes embroiled in convoluted chases, bar brawls, and shootouts. A blonde in a gauzy cloak and not much else pulls a gun on him, but between our two hackmeister directors, even this opportunity for excitement is blown to rancid bits! Thoroughly clueless and not good at all at faking fisticuffs OR passion for scantily clad women, Brown is at least likable enough. He probably thought there was a bright future ahead of him in films...Well I could've sworn he was ringing me up at Taco Bell! The cracker of the pair, Joe (Dennis Safren) is a better actor, but duller than dirt, so you'd probably need to go back and wake me up for his scenes. So basically, after a decent lead-in (complete with rooftop shootout, sub-Shaft threads, and funkoid opening theme), the film slips into semi-somnambulance, save for Brown's happy-go-lucky shenanigans and his striking gal-pal (Tracy King, the bright spot of this whole thing). No classic blaxploiter, but a lot more engaging than Adamson's other mocha-flavored cash-ins (like the ones he directed himself!), which just ripped off the inner city crowd without delivering ANY of the goods.

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and the Mob
for his Women!

MEAN MOTHER

CLIFTON BROWN DENNIS SAFREN LUCIANA PALUZZI

THE RAZOR: SWORD OF JUSTICE (AnimEigo; 1972). First in a series of six films about samurai Hanzo Itami (Shintaro Katsu from ZATOICHI), this was written by Kazuo Koike (co-creator of LONE WOLF AND CUB) and directed by Kenji Misumi, a superb visual stylist who helmed the finest entries in the LONE WOLF, ZATOICHI, and MAIJIN series. Not nearly as gore-soaked as LONE WOLF, RAZOR nonetheless hits levels of sadomasochism, misogyny, and black humor undreamed of in Koike's and Misumi's other works. Itami is basically a cop uncovering corruption in the Shogunate, which leads straight to his superior, Onishi, who also stands in the way of him getting a promotion. But our man Hanzo is hardly playing with a full deck—he puts himself through grueling tortures, like piling a ton of spiked blocks on his legs, and in a wince-inducing scene for all you hardcore masochists out there, hammers his penis on a wood block; and thrusts it through straw, then uses his toughened member to...how to put this, "interrogate" female suspects (hence, the name "razor"). This heap of Asian trash is, par for Misumi, lavishly shot; and I really dug Katsu's handling of the character—from the self-deprecating humor and moral ambivalence to the fact he seems to know he's totally fugazi, but still does what he feels he must (like brutally "apprehending" condemned felons but then spiriting them off to do his bidding in return for their lives). As a knife twisted in the back of chambara cinema, an over-the-top farce on police honor, or a sick treat for us squeamish westerners, this film delivers—all the way down to the blaxploitation/porno-styled soundtrack! A true oddity.

MARC GAYAN; McDonald, Ohio.

CLOCKWORK TERROR (1973). Oookay, here's an oddity for ya: Would you believe a Spanish rip-off/remake of A CLOCKWORK ORANGE starring Sue "Lolita" Lyon and Chris Mitchum, directed by Eloy (CANNIBAL MAN) De La Iglesia? Well doubt not. Lyon plays a respectable, award-winning nurse who secretly likes to kill young men via a scalpel through the heart, and Mitchum's a member of a droog-like gang prone to anti-social acts, one of which just so happens to involve the blackmail of poor ole Sue. It's all supposed to take place in an unspecified future, although apparently '70s fashions are still suspiciously popular, and people play music on what appear to be K-Mart tape recorders (bet the production designer worked his ass off for this one!). Extremely odd and quite enjoyable, but I'm really at a loss as to what this goofy concoction is trying to say (life sucks, so you might as well be dead?), but when it comes to curios like this, do you really need a point? **ALIEN 2: ON EARTH (1987).** See aliens that resemble piles of internal organs! See people climb rocks for what seems like hours! See endless scenes of bowling pins being reset in the riveting climax! This Italian "ALIEN in a cave" type flick has got to be one of the most pointless, leaden movies I've seen in ages. There's a couple of good head-stretching gore scenes a la THE THING near the end, but getting there's like journeying to Sicily on foot from Kansas (a physical impossibility, akin to not falling asleep before this turd's 45-minute mark). Recommended only to those sad souls who deem it necessary to watch every thing the Italians put out in the glorious '80's (like me). And oh yeah, nerdboys, Michele Soavi's one of the stars (I'm sure he's real proud).

THE FINISHING SCHOOL (1969). This is Narciso (ISLAND OF THE DAMNED) Serrador's HOUSE THAT SCREAMED / LA RESIDENCIA in a longer, near-uncut 100 minute version, at last available in great quality (Right on, ETC!). Somebody's killing girls at a turn-of-the-century finishing school run by sadistic, possibly lesbian Lilli Palmer. Could it be her creepy, voyeuristic son? Take a guess. Familiar plot aside (but to be fair, not so familiar back in '69), this is another winner for Serrador, who in his brief career, made two of the best Spanish horror movies ever. And it's obvious this was influential to all the Italian giallos that followed in its wake, especially when you see the first murder, which is intercut with the girls' choir practice (Hmmm, maybe Bob Clark saw this before he made BLACK CHRISTMAS, too).

BODY MELT (1993). Why did everybody ignore this bizarre Aussie mutant? It's beautifully shot, fairly witty, and humorous without being idiotic and condescending (like the contemptuous BAD TASTE and DEAD ALIVE). Slim but engaging plot revolves around a group of characters in a housing development being used as unwitting guinea pigs by an unscrupulous, experimental health clinic. The best scene involves an incestuous, mutated outback family, whose children tend to pass their idle hours by killing kangaroos and devouring their adrenal glands for the high! A lot of fun, although with a title like BODY MELT, I was expecting a lot more GOO.

ADAM GROVES; Manhattan Beach, CA.

OUR HITLER, A FILM FROM GERMANY (1977). From director Hans Jurgen Syberberg, an avant-garde attempt to uncover "the Hitler in all of us." Syberberg has made a number of films dealing with German historical figures (LUDWIG, KARL MAY, REQUIEM FOR A VIRGIN KING), but this is surely his magnum opus. It re-creates Hitler's reign through a series of surreal (often mind-bendingly so) vignettes, featuring Hitler and Eva Braun as Punch and Judy dolls, a re-creation of the trial scene from M, looooooong speeches, and lots of rear projection. The images are outrageous, but the tone is deadly somber and pessimistic throughout. That is to say, Syberberg's film is often

close to unendurable, but it does have moments as extraordinary as anything I've ever seen. Of course, whether you can make it through all seven hours is another matter entirely.

DESERTERS (1983). A truly bizarre Canadian drama set during the Vietnam war. Noel, a Vancouver-based anti-war sympathizer, regularly allows Americans fleeing the draft to shack up in his house. According to his mega-slut wife, the war is "the best thing that ever happened to him." Her too! She likes to give these young men her own particular "favors"...What's more, Noah not only knows about her extra-marital activities, he (as the saying goes) likes to watch! Into this hothouse comes a sniveling-wimp draft dodger and a psychotic drill sergeant. Naturally, Noah's wife attempts to bag 'em both (in the same night, no less!)...What follows is a four-way shout-fest that plays like Eugene O'Neill on PCP. Writer-producer-director Jack Darcus doesn't demonstrate much film-making skill—technically, this ultra-low budgeter never rises above a student-film level of competence. Luckily, the actors work overtime, particularly Alan Scarfe (Canada's answer to Robert DeNiro) as the loony military man; he gets to deliver the film's best monologue, relating how he blows up a platoon-full of American soldiers in order to "teach them a lesson," and then massacres an entire peasant village because a few folks dared to come and look! Darcus may not be Ingmar Bergman,

but he does deserve points for audaciousness, as well as dealing seriously with "the 'Nam" long before it became fashionable.

INVISIBLE ADVERSARIES (1977). Hilariously pretentious nonsense from German performance artist-turned-filmmaker Valie Export. This, her debut film, is similar to the work of Dusan Makavejev (in particular WR: MYSTERIES OF THE ORGANISM), but unlike Makavejev, Export actually appears to have some actual—albeit slim—talent. A young Viennese woman wakes up one morning believing that aliens are taking over the bodies of her fellow citizens. Her boyfriend pisses on her head and a squealing baby is found strapp'd inside her refrigerator, while outside people passionately lick the sidewalk. Later, she takes a snapshot of her own shit and dreams of walking the streets wearing ice skates. This is all just as much fun as it sounds, but unfortunately we're also subjected to many unbearable dialogue exchanges ("the glorification of your personal anarchy is pure egotism!"), and a long-winded sermon entitled "When is a woman a human being?" This is one of those films that makes me thank God for video—it's worth viewing, but a fast forward button is essential.



THE OLD GUN (1974). Philippe Noiret plays a peaceful country doctor in Nazi-occupied France. After some SS officers murder his wife and young daughter he goes mad and, utilizing the title firearm, methodically picks off his enemies one at a time. This French flick is violent as Hell, but also (believe it or not) a sensitive drama of loss and madness. Director Robert Enrico (*AN OCCURRENCE AT OWL CREEK BRIDGE*) keeps the action appropriately fast and brutal, but never allows us (or the hero) to revel in the bloodshed. As for Noiret, this is definitely one of his very best performances, up there with his excellent work (in a similar role) in Bertrand Tavernier's classic *COUP DE TORCHON* (1980). Only the crappy dubbing and silly flashbacks, featuring a vapid Romy Schneider as Noiret's wife, detract. Great ending, though: Noiret, armed with a flame-thrower, confronts the head Nazi through a one way mirror. I guess the nearest American equivalent to this film would be the work of Sam Peckinpah—call it *STRAW FROGS*!

ALCURADA [a.k.a. Sisters of Satan, Innocents From Hell, Mark of the Devil Part III, and many others] (1975). Nunsploitation at its finest! Alcurada, a new recruit at a secluded convent, becomes possessed by evil spirits and inspires a *DEVILS*-like uprising among the other nuns. The photography is great, with much bizarre imagery (re-animated corpses arising from blood-filled coffins), lezbo orgies, mass carnage, and some of the wildest (not to mention bloodiest) exorcism rituals you'll ever see. Director Juan Lopez Moctezuma

was a former associate of Jodorowsky, and it shows. Of Moctezuma's other films, *DR. TARR'S TORTURE DUNGEON* (1970) is well worth checking out, but *MARY, MARY, BLOODY MARY* (1974) and *TO KILL A STRANGER* (1981) should both be avoided at all costs.

SALOME (1974). This film is fucking INSANE! For those of you (like me) searching for something to fill the void left after repeated viewings of *THE HOLY MOUNTAIN*, look no further! Italian madman Carmelo Bene's interpretation of the classic Oscar Wilde play looks like a collaboration between Ken Russell and Alejandro Jodorowsky, with art direction by Heironymous Bosch and Andy Warhol. Salome peels the skin from the king's face, her mother ascends to Heaven on home-made angel wings, and a man crucifies himself on a flashing neon cross. Wow! If your brain isn't completely cooked by constantly moving camera or the chainsaw editing, then the eye-burning colors should do it. Carmelo Bene has made four other films—I've seen none of them but, based on *SALOME*, I believe him to be one of the neglected geniuses of the cinema. A masterpiece of cine-lunacy!

TIMOTHY FRIEND; Belton, MO.

THE ADVENTURES OF PIPPI LONGSTOCKING. I couldn't find the year this was released and very little mention of this once popular series. And no wonder. This is one sick flick. I rented it to satisfy my wife's nostalgia and both our jaws dropped when we watched it. The books by Astrid Lindgren may be fanciful tales aimed at young girls but this movie is probably owned by every sick pedophile in the country what with Pippi's underwear having as much screen time as her face, and her frequent cries of "Spunk!". Scenes such as a boat load of sweaty, grinning sailors tossing Pippi back and forth while her father cheers them on have an almost unbearable squirm-factor. I'd bet a hundred dollars renting this tape immediately gets you a high profile, red-flagged FBI folder. Needless to say my wife had no interest in watching the other films in the series. Most memorable line: "Spunk exams are free."

CATCH AS CATCH CAN (1965). Director Franco Inedovera's film wants to be a satire on the ad industry, but this mod Italian comedy works best as a sexy, slapstick farce. Vittorio Gassman plays the country's top model who suddenly and inexplicably finds himself under attack by the animal kingdom. Dogs, chickens and even flies conspire to make his life a living hell. For most folks this would be a minor annoyance but here every situation escalates to incredible proportion. The best scene involves Gassman and a woman rolling



downhill in a giant soup can prop. The two are shown (in slo-mo) desperately trying to maintain their balance and "accidentally" tearing each others clothes off in their efforts, turning the bit into a parody of a steamy love scene. The movie ends on an out-of-left-field and completely senseless note attempting to make some kind of pretentious statement about the nature of man. I loved it. The film is also blessed with a theme that will burrow into your brain faster than a diamond tipped drill bit.

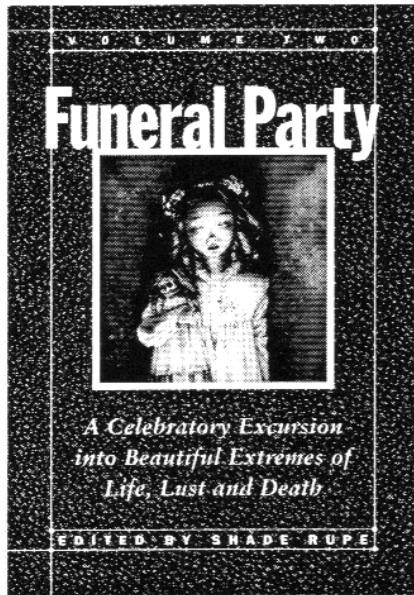
ATTACK OF THE SUPER-MONSTERS. The ultimate movie if you're a six year old and pretty damn entertaining for anyone else. This English-dubbed monster-fest is actually several episodes of an early 70's Japanese TV series edited to feature length. The plot concerns a subterranean race of evil (talking) dinosaurs intent on destroying mankind. The thing that sets this apart from similar films is that the humans are all animated. No actors grace the screen. Just an hour-and-a-half of excellent Thunderbirds-style super-vehicles, sub-par animation and an army of stomping-mad monsters that are, at various times, men in rubber suits, stop-motion or hand-puppets. It's pure unadulterated, mass-destruction induced fun. As an added bonus one of the hero's vehicles is outfitted with a giant buzzsaw so there is quite a bit of gory, monster dismemberment. Children's shows in America should be so entertaining.

JOHN HARTZELL; Chicago, IL. REVENGE OF THE CHEERLEADERS (1975). This sleazy teenage sex comedy

bursts from the screen with such hormonal frenzy that you can actually feel the zits sprouting on your face while watching it. It features tons of nudity, including numerous shots of various pubic regions, which is something you rarely see nowadays outside a Robert Altman film. Wasting no time, our beloved cheerleaders change their tops in a moving convertible during the opening credits. Among them is the very pregnant Rainbeaux Smith, who still does all her nude scenes like a trooper. One shy actress, the mysterious sixth cheerleader, hides behind the dashboard during the process. This timid lass disappears before the next scene, when these, the world's worst cheerleaders, demonstrate their non-ability for their classmates at Aloha High School in Aloha, California. Displaying all the acrobatic panache of a macaroni salad, they are still the heroes of the school. They tell lots of stupid jokes, jump around, and act like morons in various states of undress. The cheerleader named Sesame has a particularly difficult time remaining clothed and acts stoned throughout the film. The entire cast goes to a diner for a hideously unchoreographed "dance" sequence, during which scrawny David Hasselhoff (as school basketball star Boner—the role he was born to play) truly humiliates himself. Also appearing is the mysterious sixth cheerleader, who seems to show up only for the numerous and unfortunate dance numbers, probably to compensate for Rainbeaux's condition. A couple of the cheerleaders visit a vo-tech school and hold an entire classroom at bay with a fire extinguisher and steal everybody's stash, including the teacher's! The stolen drugs end up in their school's spaghetti sauce, leading to a messy food fight on the cheap-looking cafeteria set. We are treated to the obligatory coed shower scene, where you can witness Rainbeaux in all her stunning eighth-month glory, as well as David H.'s skinny butt. Their "half-time show rehearsal" is unbelievable with both cheerleaders and basketball players traipsing about like epileptic jellyfish. Two of the cheerleaders walk through a wooded area and have sex with some schmo in a boy scout uniform (the first person they run into) mainly because there is nothing else going on. During a basketball game, Boner is knocked out by the school nurse, but revived by Sesame's underwear just in time to win the game. "Aloha basket by Boner!" the announcer proudly proclaims. The cheerleaders respond with some desperate attempts at double entendre ("Get it up! Get it up! Up! Up!"). The film loses steam toward the end, with some really lame chase scenes and attempts at slapstick humor. A pasted-on epilogue (supposedly taking place three months later) shows a skinny Rainbeaux with her newborn baby...like it means something!

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SHARP RELIEF

by TAVIS
RIKER

For this installment of Sharp Relief we explore the musical genre for which the term "for fans *only*" was created. Yes, just say the words "progressive rock" and suddenly it's "man talk" as the guys exchange tour info, and the gals bust a move! Well, some new video and CD releases offer some relief for those intrepid watchers/listeners for whom no song under 6 minutes and without at least 2 time signature changes 'makes it'. Who better to kick off with than the undisputed champs of prog rock carnage, **King Crimson**. The new video release **LIVE IN TOKYO 1995** (Discipline Global Mobile) and newest CD "Thrakattak" capture a truly amazing new six-man lineup (two drummers! Mutant multi-stringed 'guitar-like' instruments!) as they blaze through old and new material from their vast 25+(!) years of on-and-off again existence. Filmed on two nights during their last world "campaign", you get almost two hours of the mind-boggling precision of instrumentals like "Red" and "Thrak", with generous pitstops for frontman Adrian Belew to sing classics like "Frame By Frame" from *Discipline* and the gorgeous new ballad "Walking on Air". For those Crimsonheads who can't get enough of "guys in a room twiddling their fingers" (ex-Police drummer Stewart Copeland's apt description), a new 4 CD set "Epitaph" is dedicated to their early 70's live work (and is a great title, because your love life will need a funeral service as these extended jams top the 5-hour mark).

Treading into the prog jungle even farther, we trip across **Marillion**. Now I wasn't a big fan of these guys in their early 80's heyday, but with the addition of Steve Hogarth on vocals (stepping in for ex-Frontman "Fish"), they've embarked on a series of increasingly powerful pop/prog projects. One of the best of these was a (here it comes) *concept album* called "Brave"--and what concept album would be complete without an accompanying 60-minute film? [would have loved to see the Peter Gabriel/Alexandro Jodorowsky collaboration on a feature film script for the Genesis' "Lamb Lies Down on Broadway" album actually get made. Did they finish it? Did Peter shave his head and watch THE HOLY MOUNTAIN just to prepare? Sigh.] The good news is that director Richard Stanley, who helmed the overrated **HARDWARE** and the underrated **DUST DEVIL**, brings considerable style to the proceedings and the 'story', which has a Roger Waters-esque edge, and is throughly depressing [Yay!]. We get an hour comprised of---hypnosis (of the 'let's go back to your childhood' variety), trippy "where am I?" dementia, early MTV-style keys (band members in front of stock war

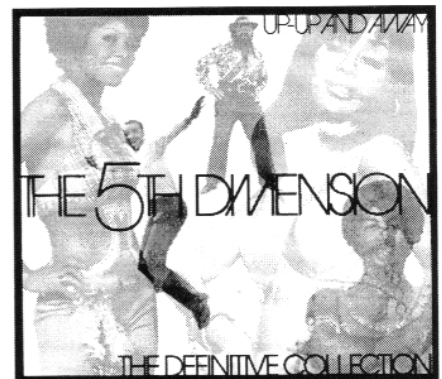
footage, etc.) and junkie squatters in London! Whew. Add some Satanic rituals and wrist-slashing bathtub action and you'd be hard pressed to pull a hit single out of this baby. Nonetheless, a cool addition to the prog archive. Marillion's latest CD, "This Strange Engine", is equally strong, and with the massive title track clocking in at 16 minutes! "Epitaph", indeed! Just to be "fan boy," Steve Hogarth's solo CD, "Ice Cream Genius" is also fabulous, and features great players like Steve Jansen (awesome ex-Japan drummer) and Dave Gregory (XTC!).

We here at Sharp Relief (well, *me* here at Sharp Relief) must acknowledge the passing of our Beat Generation fathers Allen Ginsburg and William S. Burroughs (if *he* was really human is another question...). Last year's expansive Whitney Museum retrospective brought out some amazing artifacts from the private archives of many beat icons (Kerouac's *paintings!*), and for those lucky folks who got there, a great documentary made for the occasion captures the energy and creative force of this core group. **THE BEAT EXPERIENCE** is a rare example of an introduction to a movement that is not a prolonged "yawn op" for us folks in the know. Basically a one-hour sight and sound collage, broken up into sections with titles like "In a Sentimental Mood" and "Dead Fingers Talk" (Guess who pops up in *this* section), it offers a kaleidoscopic view of America, 40's thru 60's, as seen by authors, animators and musicians. While a few big-time contributors are left out of the party (poet Lawrence Ferlingetti, Goofball owner Chet Baker, "Cool School" players like Stan Getz and Gerry Mulligan), a huge thanks to director John Carlin and the Red Hot Orga-

nization for a way cool job. Hopefully it'll pop up on PBS sometime and checkout the "Beat" CD-ROM if you're so inclined.

Another big blast from the past comes to us from Kino Video, who have been restoring and releasing some of the finest (and strangest) film rarities, from silent era comedies to avant-garde weirdness. Their new 4-tape set **HOLLYWOOD RHYTHM** is an exhaustive collection of the amazing musical short films made at Paramount as pre-feature fodder (instead of the 20 minutes of teeth-grinding trailers we get today) from the late 20's until 1941. These "featurettes" had stars ranging from music icons like Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong (whose "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead You Rascal You" has Louis in a leopard-skin native outfit, stand-

ing knee-deep in soap bubbles! As part of a dream sequence!) to future screen party animals Cary Grant and Betty Boop! As most of these numbers were filmed before the Hays Code brought the hammer down on, well, *fun*, many have a decidedly boozy, smoky and sexy vibe lurking just below (or flaunting it right on) the surface. Each tape has 7 or 8 of these gems, and just to complete the program, a few songs venture off the studio lot (including Bessie Smith and Fats Waller), and all have been very nicely restored (*lord knows* where some of these negatives were collecting dust), making it a must-see for fans of early movie dementia and great music. Yowza!



UP, UP, AND AWAY DEPT': Just a 'heads up' for those readers who got all warm and fuzzy last column when **THE FIFTH DIMENSION TRAVELING SUNSHINE SHOW** was reviewed. (Those of you who became disgusted or bored can move on). Arista has finally remastered the **DEFINITIVE** collection of the 5D's, "Up, Up and Away." Not only is it "20-bit remastered" (which I guess is better than the 19-bits they had a year ago), but it's a *totally* groovy package (way cool photos, ultra-slick graphics) and it delivers all the hits and the coolest album tracks, with Laura Nyro and Jimmy Webb B-sides aboard!

'WHERE ARE THEY NOW? FILE: All late 80's rock fans fondly recall the hilarious Spinal Tap-esque escapades documented in **THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION PART 2: THE METAL YEARS**. Penelope Spheeris' unflinching take on L.A.'s "glam metal" scene. The light-hearted proceedings came to an abrupt halt as Spheeris shifted her focus from the media-savvy members of **Poison** and **Faster Pussycat** to interview guitarist Chris Holmes of **W.A.S.P.** Lounging in a pool and about 3 bottles of vodka past a breathalyzer test, Chris basically falls apart with such quotables as "I'm a piece of shit" and "I'm an alcoholic--just fuckin' ask my ma" (who is stone-faced poolside). Well, for those of you who skip the "**Warrant-Slaughter-Ratt**" bill hitting the sheds this season, lead singer/bassist/provocateur Blackie Lawless has bailed Chris out of rehab and hit the road promoting their family-oriented disc "Kill Fuck Die" (*don't* think Wal-Mart has it in stock), and **Motorhead** opened up for 'em here in NYC. Just to see Chris upright might be worth getting your hand stamped at the local metal dive.

Kudos this column go to: Chip Ruggieri, Mandy Groves at Pastiche (U.K.), Kino Video, and Richard J. Alfredo. **SHARP RELIEF WILL RETURN**

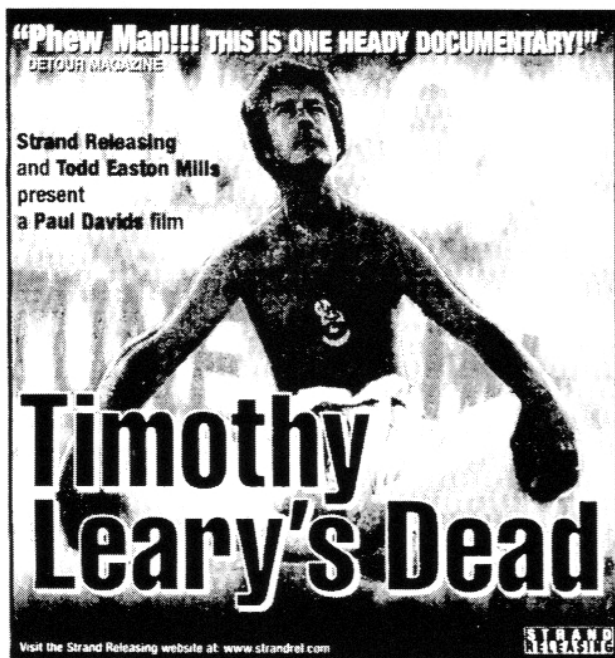


UNDERGROUND ODDITIES

THE 4th ANNUAL NEW YORK UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL

Once again, the NYUFF presented another delirious, five-day program, running from March 19-23, 1997. And although I could only make it to a half-dozen showings (since I was in the midst of laying out the Spring edition of SC), I wish I'd had time for more. This fest is a must-see for everyone who complains that current-day movies suck. Are you aghast at the \$100+ million-dollar **BATMAN AND ROBIN**? Well then, check out what some *real* filmmakers can crank out on a budget that wouldn't pay for Joel Schumaker's collection of Jeff Stryker videos.

Still, as much as I love and respect the fest, The NY Film Academy on 100 East 17th Street is far from a viewer-friendly venue. The theatre is nestled somewhere up on the third (or was it fourth?) floor, and quickly, those hard folding chairs began to play havoc with my spine. Of course, you could put a spin on it, and say that this type of raw environment truly represents the indie spirit. Try telling that to an audience when one speaker is crackling so loudly that you can't concentrate on the movie. Better still, during one showing, there was only one projector, which meant sitting in the dark at the end of each reel, as the projectionist hurried to slap on the next segment. For me, it brought back fond memories of my days programming the film series at Syracuse University, dealing with the same type of technical glitches...But let's get onto the real reason we're here, The Movies...



Paul Davids' **TIMOTHY LEARY'S DEAD** [Strand Releasing] is a trip-and-a-half. Opening with news broadcasts of his death, plenty of hippie era pictures, and (of course) The Moody Blues' classic title tune, this is a wonderful overview of this "high priest of the drug revolution." Although it doesn't offer much new to anyone already versed in Leary's legacy, it's a loving look back at his life and times.

Much of the footage is choice. Mingling new and old clips, there are images from his Harvard beginnings of the early '60s, the glory daze at Millbrook, prison interviews from '75, all the way to early '90s footage of a time-and-illness ravaged Leary (who was pushing 75, but looked more like 120). This covers all of the bases, in record time, from getting tossed out of West Point, then Harvard, to Leary's emergence as a modern-day guru. He runs for Governor against Reagan. He's arrested for having two roaches in his ashtay. He escapes from prison in '70, and ends up in Algiers with Eldridge Cleaver. And wouldya believe Leary was once in a cell next to Manson? What a guy! Meanwhile, the respectful filmmakers are (a

little too) careful to exclude any negative comments, with the exception of some insignificant, uniformed pig...er, cop.

Of course, when the aged Leary rambles on about cryogenically freezing his dead head and laughs about his upcoming passing, the film truly captures the essence of the man, complete with deathbed footage at the very end. But just so you don't get too sentimental, as one final cosmic joke, we actually see Leary's head surgically removed from his body, put on ice, and carted off! Wow! If that isn't a finale, I don't know what is!

Loaded with the usual urban wreckage and layabouts, Dean Bivens' **THE ELECTRIC URN** [Groovy Boots Productions, 14 E. 4th Street, Ste. 812, New York, NY 10012] is a trippy vision of NYC's Lower East Side. Shifting between various episodes, this is a mosaic of musicians, writers and weirdos. A long-haired poet, Jim (Al Shannon) sells his poems on the street, like a nickel-bag pusher. A female director casts her next film. A dopey musician tries to impress his cute blonde neighbor. And Jim and his pal Johnny discuss their fictional, half-baked band (which never comes together, of course). And when things slow down, why not hold a party at a 'borrowed' pad? Or what about all of the femmes vying for an upcoming film role as the Space Queen (including a prissy drag queen)? Of course, it all comes together at a nightspot called The Electric Urn, including a cat fight and a last minute gig for The Band.

While the story is slight, the directorial finesse is what keeps it running on empty. I particularly enjoyed the woman kept in a living room cage (and referred to as the "Chick in a Birdcage"). And how about a gratuitous trip sequence after munching on a huge mushroom, featuring a guy wearing a huge bunny head?! Loaded with groovy camerawork courtesy of George Mitas, this strives to be a '90s take on pics like **BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS**, on a fraction of the budget, but with all of the enthusiasm. Fitfully amusing, this scattershot tale is fueled by arch performances and camp value galore, and will be best appreciated by East Villagers who know this lifestyle all too well.

Another program in the fest was entitled "**Don't Quit Your Day Job!: The Films of Jeff Krulik & Friends**" [3221 Connecticut Avenue, NW #308, Washington, DC 20008], a retrospect of his raw, yet lovable short documentaries. In **KING OF PORN**, we meet Ralph Wittington, a porno "archivist" and his (scary) houseful of X-rated crapola, including blow-up dolls, dirty magazines, and shelf after shelf of videos. For **ERNEST BORGNINE ON TOUR**, Krulik joins Oscar-winner Borgnine on the road, in his own personal bus named The Sunbum. Squeezed behind the wheel (and with his gigantic gut, that's not an easy task), happy-go-lucky Ernie pulls into truck stops, visits a Miller brewing plant, and makes friends wherever he goes. Complete with tunes like The Replacements' "On the Bus" and The Who's "Magic Bus," this is a slight, but likable lark, fueled by Borgnine's never-ending hamminess.

In the crude but classic **HEAVY METAL PARKING LOT**, Krulik and his crew journeyed into the depths of Largo, Michigan to pose as MTV and film the shirtless, drunken nitwits who're attending a 1986 Judas Priest concert. While **THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION II: THE METAL YEARS** offered up the *creme de la cretins*, these folks are simply loud, drunk, white trash pinheads. Where's a machine gun when you need one? Then, in a brilliant move, ten years later, Krulik returned to Largo for **NEIL DIAMOND PARKING LOT**, in which old farts reminisce about their first Diamond concert, as they're shuffling their way in. It's a good companion piece to their first parking lot profile, even if it lacks the sphincter-tightening idiocy of that first gem.

Of all of Krulik's pics, my favorite has to be **MR. BLASSIE GOES TO WASHINGTON**, in which the filmmakers invite wrestling legend Freddie Blassie (the self-proclaimed "King of Men") to Washington DC, then provide him with an entourage of young lovelies and a stretch limo. From there on, they've got this blowhard screaming at The White House, posing for pictures with Buddhist monks, and saying that he'd like to tear down the Washington Monument and build a statue of himself in its place. In fact, the only time the guy chills out is when he reminisces about the late Andy Kaufman (his co-star in **MY BREAKFAST WITH BLASSIE**).

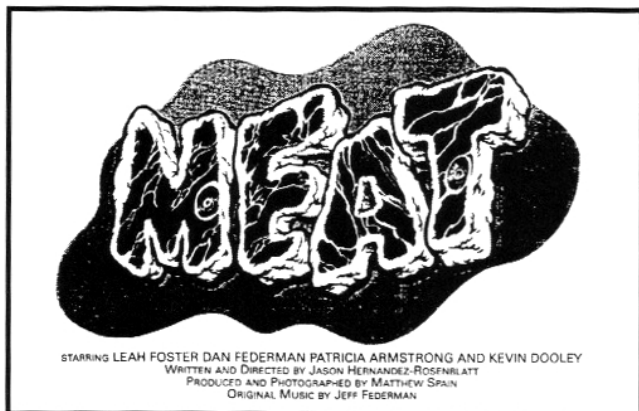
Some of most bizarre entries were tucked together in a program appropriately entitled "Teen Cannibal Freak-Out." First off, Dan and Paul Dinello's **SHOCK ASYLUM** [Shock Productions, 255 E.10th Street, Apt. 3A, New York, NY

10009] is a b&w, 15-minute blast of deviant fun, in which a young man goes to a psychiatric hospital for an ordinary mental check-up. Suddenly, he's restrained, drugged, undergoes electroshock, and is prepared for "cranial drill therapy." Briskly paced, wildly performed (including Paul Dinello as Mr. Gaxton) and laced with great props, this over-the-top enterprise later won the festival's prize for Best Short Film.

Huck Botko's 10-minute **BAKED ALASKA** [279 East Houston St. #3A, New York, NY 10002] is a crude, but vengefully heartfelt prank-documentary in which Botko tracks down his wayward mom, to a trailer home in Yellowstone. There he fixes her a Baked Alaska, and conveniently forgets to mention that his fresh ingredients include various roadkill he picked up along the way. A small, wondrous vision of revenge at its cheapest and most exploitable.

John Webb's 24-minute **GOITERBOY** [c/o FSU Film School, A3100 University Center, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2084] is a splendidly conceived tale of small-town rejects. Our title character is Cleitus, a teenage gas pump jockey with one big problem—a goiter on the side of his neck the size of a water balloon. Ridiculed by his classmates, his luck seems to change when Haley, a cute blonde cheerleader, goes on a date with him. Little does he know, it's only because she loses a bet; yet oddly, Haley isn't repulsed by his massive goiter, since she has her own truckload of secrets to bare. It's a sweet love story, slickly-made and ingratiating, though a tad on the self-serious side. William Maier III brings the proper sympathy to Cleitus (complete with all-too-realistic make-up), while Meagan Love offers up solid support as Haley. At its best, this feels like a lovably deranged AfterSchool Special, especially when Cleitus fantasizes about killing all of the abusive teens.

One of the most entertaining entries was **MEAT** [Red Five Films, 61A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217], a 17-minute, Brooklyn-lensed tale of teen angst and cannibalism, courtesy of director Jason Hernandez-Rosenblatt. Meet Annabelle Walker, our 16-year-old narrator, whose happy-go-lucky family consists of her door-to-door Bible salesman dad, her brother Josh (who she sleeps with), and her masseuse mom—who chops up her clients for dinner. But when Ma comes down with carpal tunnel syndrome and the family's meat supply is threatened, the only reasonable alternative is to take Annabelle's dates into the basement and chop them up with power tools. Of course, this type of situation can ruin a young girl's love life, and soon she wants her freedom—that is, if they'll let her go.



This lovable dose of sick-assed laughs is played with a straight face, and wonderfully lensed by Matthew Spain. Better still, the entire cast is first rate, headed up by Leah Foster as this troubled teen. Amazingly grim and startlingly funny, **MEAT** is paved with moments of twisted genius—from blood and grue spraying in every direction, to potshots at religious hokey (when Annabelle announces she wants to turn vegetarian, she's told it would "make Baby Jesus cry"). It even tosses a little **SWITCHBLADE SISTERS** into the finale. Cool!

Sam Green's **THE RAINBOW MAN / JOHN 3:16** [878 Grove Street, San Francisco, CA 94117] was, without question, one of the fest's most entertainingly

THE RAINBOW MAN / JOHN 3:16



twisted portraits (as well as the fest prize-winner for Best Documentary). It focuses on Rollen Stuart, who in the late-'70s/early-'80s popped up at thousands of sporting events, with his lovable rainbow afro wig and increasingly-less-lovable "John 3:16" banner. Nowadays, this media mini-star is in prison, serving three life sentences, all in the name of Jesus Christ.

How did he get there, and what does it take to become a flash-in-the-pan media icon? This flick has it all, right down to quotes from Rollen's unpublished biography and childhood home movies (obtained from his daughter). Beginning as a flaky marijuana grower, in 1976 Stuart had an epiphany to become an instant home-grown celebrity, but soon realized that there's more to life than attending the Super Bowl in a rainbow wig and loin cloth. And after watching a late-nite Bible prophecy show, Rollen found his calling with the Lord. Selling everything, the guy drove 60,000 miles a year, for eight years—living out of his car and hitting every televised sporting event he could get into, in order to use

"God's satellite coverage." Displaying his "John 3:16" banner at any sign of a TV-camera, he pissed off TV producers, and even made it into the front row of **THE PRICE IS RIGHT**.

But when you're as nuts as this guy is, things aren't always going to be so rosy. Because even if he believed "Christ will come back before my money runs out," Rollen is soon broke and dumped, and decides to get publicity for the upcoming apocalypse by setting "bombs" in religious bookstores. Finally, he winds up barricaded in a hotel room—armed, with a hostage—thinking that the Rapture is coming in only six days. What a kook! Laced with hilarious, often amazing footage of Rollen's exploits, as well as interviews from his California prison, this riveting, often-hilarious 41-minute profile of media madness is well worth a look.

This true-life dementia was preceded by Robert Edwards' **PARANOIA** [469B Ruthven Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94301], a 23-minute, real-life look at this title terror. We meet an array of skeptics (most of them idiots, of course) who worry about being manipulated by the media, corporations, governments, and anyone with an IQ in the triple digits. This brief (but blissfully silly) profile includes on-the-streets interviews, as well as the author of "We Never Went To the Moon," and poses the unanswerable question, are "malevolent forces" at work, or is the world going to shit totally on its own? Meanwhile, the trailer-length **SUBDUE THE UNIVERSE** [Taylor/Standing Productions, 5 East Somo Avenue, Tomahawk, WI 54487] from director James Taylor whisks us to the New Hampshire primaries of 1996, and focuses on the wacko contingent, including Hillary Michael Milko, who promises to harvest the moon and turn it into a nuclear waste dump.

The closing night feature, **RUNNING TIME** [Panoramic Pictures, 2636 Kansas Avenue #10, Santa Monica, CA 90404], sounds like little more than an amusing experiment. Just as Hitchcock did in **ROPE**, this 70-minute film tells its story in one continuous, uninterrupted take. But where Hitch's pic was trapped in one room, director Josh Becker turns this into a stylish, kick-ass crime yarn, fueled by expert b&w camerawork. In addition, the film greatly benefits from a typically cynical lead performance by Becker's long-time pal, Mr. **EVIL DEAD** himself, Bruce Campbell (taking a break from big studio sludge like **McHALE'S NAVY**).

Campbell plays Carl, a crook who gets paroled from prison, and only seconds out of the slammer goes to work on his next big theft—which involves heisting bags of cash from the prison's illegit laundry business. But his perfect scheme quickly turns into a comedy of errors once he meets his cut-rate crew and everything goes haywire, including to a junkie driver (always a fine idea), a broken-down van, incorrect inside info, and bickering in front of their hostages. The only thing that goes right is running into his old high school sweetheart, Janie (who's now a prostitute, given to Campbell as a surprise parole gift), and re-igniting their old passion.

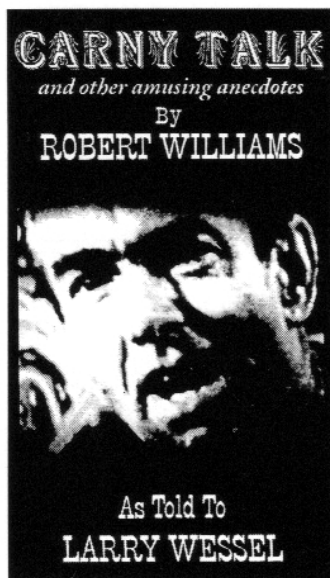
Tense, brisk and laced with wonderful plot twists, this is a tremendously entertaining film. Loaded with all the elements you'd expect in a film noir (a crime, an old flame, plus plenty of crooked slob), as well as truly innovative, ever-mobile cinematography which glides around the actors and sucks us into their ever-worsening situation. Though a little heavy on the melodrama towards the end, Campbell keeps it arch and Becker keeps it amusing. Co-starring Anita Barone and Jeremy Roberts, this is more than just a cinematic exercise. It really works!

TAUROBOLIUM (1994).

[Larry Wessel, P.O. Box 1611, Manhattan Beach, CA 90267-1611. \$25 ppd.] This amazing, unflinching, feature length documentary journeys to Tijuana for an afternoon of good ol' fashioned, south-of-the-border, family fun. Yes, it's a day at the bullfights, with director Larry Wessel taking his camera to the lip of the arena. And you quickly realize that it's a lot less graceful in real-life it is in the movies, and that these bullfighters are either fucking nuts or just sadistic bastards. Still, while these bullfighters and audience *chose* to be there, I doubt the wounded, bleeding, obviously pissed-off bulls (or, for that matter, the picadores' much-abused horses) would've been in the ring if the decision had been left up to them...There's no narration, no explanations, no interviews—just a view from the crowd. It begins with the banderilleros entering the ring, sticking the bull with their darts; followed by the horse-riding picadores. Of course, the most fun occurs when the bulls get the best of 'em (like one guy who gets the backside of his pants torn off). But you'd better prepare yourself for the final 40 minutes, when the matadors come in for the pay-off—equipped with their muletas and swords—stabbing and eventually killing the big, dumb beasts, complete with gruesome shots of half-dead bulls writhing in the dirt, as blood pours from their mouths (a la Bud Dwyer). Then, in a brilliant move, Wessel expertly juxtaposes the matadors' cheers from the crowd, while the bull carcasses are being graphically butchered backstage. Wow! So while the bullfighters are posing with local 'beauty' queens, the bull's organs are pouring onto the floor, and their skinned head is tossed into a corner. Wessel certainly knows how to go for the money shots, and this is an incredible, draining capper that'll leave all but the most stalwart viewers limp...Clocking in at 108 minutes, the movie is a little on the long side, but I wouldn't cut one second from the gruesome finale. Instead, some of the extraneous local color (like a little boy playing an accordion for two solid minutes) could've used a trimming. Still, this is a stunning document of one of the last 'great' blood sports.

CARNY TALK (1995).

[Larry Wessel, P.O. Box 1611, Manhattan Beach, CA 90267-1611; \$25 ppd.] Shot in North Hollywood, in 1988, the premise of this film is pretty simple. Director Larry Wessel simply sits down with acclaimed artist-madman Robert Williams, lets the (often shaky) camera roll, and captures 71 minutes worth of bizarre anecdotes from his past—usually in extreme close-up. It's one big, long talking head. Still, the stories are worth a listen, even if Williams rambles a bit and often peters out without a punch line. The flick is broken up into short segments. "Carny Talk" has him working the Nickel Toss Booth, learning their secret language (hence the title), and meeting the freaks (such as the Octopus Man, covered in fleshy pods). By far, the funniest yarn is "The Great Fecal Matter," which has Williams and his pals creating a Monster Turd for a prank—from three pounds of terra cotta clay,



canned corn and stewed tomatoes—then freaking out partygoers with the enormity of this mock-bowel movement. There's also "Hospital Still Borns," when Williams played 'stork' by leaving the title fetuses on neighborhood doorsteps one night; while "The Blow Job" has him waiting in line when a carny fat lady decides to take on all cummers. Overflowing with cool anecdotes, this offers up a glimpse into late-'50s delinquency. It's also particularly recommended if you're a fan of Williams' artwork, since this profile gives you an idea of the early incidents which became a foundation for his later creations. And in a refreshing change of pace from most current indie filmmakers, who put their own (usually under-baked) attitude at the forefront, Wessel prefers to find fascinating subjects and gives them the spotlight. It's a generous approach, and in this instance, it works to perfection.

SUPER THRILL OVER KILL (1997).

[Sub-Vision Films, c/o Eric Brummer, 4000 D W. Magnolia Blvd. Suite #120, Burbank, CA 91505]

Whenever I receive a new movie from Eric Brummer, one thing's for sure—I'm not going to be bored. In last year's *ELECTRIC FLESH*, he bombarded viewers with grue-soaked animation, and his latest experimental venture returns to live-action for a 12-minute, non-stop, sexual assault. On the surface, it sounds pretty simple.

A montage of various young women in various states of undress, preening for Eric's camera. They're topless, they're masturbating, they're writhing on beds, and one gal even pulls a chain out of her vagina and licks it. And the "climax" is, well, self-explanatory. What sets this apart from your average jerk-off material is how Brummer continually reminds you that you're watching a movie, with his use of intentional scratches, fragmented images, and hand-painted frames. Meanwhile the soundtrack is a melting pot of sexual moaning and groaning, with music by Barry Mitchell. Though certainly a lightweight endeavor, *SUPER THRILL*'s playful style reminded me of early underground artists, such as Jack Smith—mixed with the more tawdry pursuits of Richard Kern.

**WIG RODEO (1997).**

[Marcel deJure, P.O. Box 291516, Los Angeles, CA 90029]

Without question, I should've been a lot more fucked up when I popped this seemingly-innocent video into my VCR. Still, even if you're without the proper medication, you'll *feel* like you are by the end of this surreal 20-minute film. Filmed in black-and-white and with no (intelligible) dialogue, this puts its live actors through Norman McLaren-like, stop-motion paces. Set in some dreary urban city, Wife (Ghia Avesani) slaves away in a basement factory, twisting wire into coat hangers (in a clever use of reverse photography), as she's screamed at by the lazy male overseers—one of whom is so fat he could crush you with his ass. Meanwhile, Husband (Jeff Charroux) beats at things with a hammer (including a human dummy). They ride their bikes to and fro, eat a dinner consisting of a potful of potatoes, and finally, the film explodes in a barrage of odd characters, violence and death. As you can guess, this is all extremely strange and impossible to synopsize. In linear terms, this beautifully deranged gem makes *ERASERHEAD* look like *LITTLE WOMEN*, and is filled with moments of truly twisted charm. Even better, it's also goddamned funny! The heavily-made-up cast enthusiastically throws themselves into their roles, the animated front and end credits are a dose of bad acid in celluloid form, and the film is laced with disorienting sound effects when people do ordinary things, like scratching their head or blinking. This is *TETSUO* American-style, mixed with a good grasp on the drudgery of modern life and work. Blisteringly edited and mind-alteringly weird, Marcel deJure is certainly a talent to keep an eye on.

YOU'RE STILL NOT FOOLING ANYBODY (1997).

[Impossibly Funky Productions, P.O. Box 2401, Riverview, MI 48192]

A couple years back, Mike White took the media spotlight with his short film, *WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE FOOLING?*, which compared several scenes in Tarantino's *RESERVOIR DOGS* with Ringo Lam's earlier *CITY ON FIRE* (with Quentin reportedly saying he'd never seen the Hong Kong original...yeah, right). Opening with MTV's coverage of his first flick, this barely-three-minute follow-up dives headfirst into a few other 'coincidental' similarities---this time around, with regards to *PULP FICTION*. Samuel Jackson's early reading of Ezekiel 25:17 is compared with the identical, opening scroll from Sonny Chiba's *THE BODY-GUARD*; Ving Rhames' quip about going to work on you with "a pair of pliers and a blowtorch" is echoed in Don Siegel's excellent *CHARLEY VARRICK*; and of course, *PULP*'s glowing briefcase is compared to Robert Aldrich's similar prop in *KISS ME, DEADLY*. But the most impressive parallel is between Scorsese's documentary *AMERICAN BOY* and the identical adrenaline needle scene with Uma Thurman. On a technical note, this throwaway is pretty spiffy, with White running the sequences side-by-side, using a split-screen. On the down side, this approach makes it a bitch to hear at times. And if you're a Tarantino fanatic, try not to get too bent out of shape, since White clearly has a sense of humor about this flick--and even proclaims his film "In Plagiavision".

THE GOOD BOOK (1997).

[Drop Dead Films, Suite 185, Watchung Plaza, Montclair, NJ 07042]

Fueled with clever ideas and a refreshingly literate script, this indie sci-fi thriller works better in thought than in final result. It's like a great short story stretched to a very long 81 minutes. Set in "the near future," the crumbling government has set up a zone across North America. People can either be a part of it—living solely

through the Internet and never leaving their homes—or rebel and deal with the de-evolutionary consequences, which has them looking like a Romero reject. Brian Campbell stars as computer repairman Joseph Cyrus, one of the rare “insiders” allowed to journey outdoors, who meets a long-haired oddball (co-scripter Barry Gerdsen) who calls himself God and picks Cyrus as his latest mortal with a mission. As these mysterious encounters continue, Cyrus’ co-workers shun him, hallucinations kick in, and he begins to wonder if this is how Moses felt. And why is Cyrus the recipient of this visitation? Because he once created a virus that could infect the entire Internet (“mankind’s umbilical cord,” as he puts it), and God wants him to finish the job and save the world. In the end, Cyrus (of course) becomes a fugitive, with protracted chases and monster make-up that looks like it belongs in an Ozzy video. Laced with effective plot twists, director Matthew Giaquinto does a fine job bringing this high-concept in on a low-budget (in addition to casting himself as Jesus in a bit part...which says plenty about his self-image). While several sequences are on the limp side, my favorite bits involve the film’s view of computer nerd-dom taken to its futuristic extreme. As for entertainment of the future? Well, Home Download Theater is presenting “Vampire Girlfriend Roommates, Part 5.” Sigh...I guess some things never change.

TURN OF THE CENTURY (1997).

[Dame Darcy, Box 730, New York, NY 10009; \$21.95]

This is a wild, hour-long compilation of the best and weirdest of Dame Darcy’s public access show. A favorite of Manhattan cable, this tape (shot on video, with much of it in sepia tone) will finally give the less enlightened portions of civilization a taste of Ms. MEATCAKE’s retro-cult sensibilities. After an array of introductions, culled from various shows, we get a barrage of brain-damaged episodes from Darcy’s fertile (some might say *too* fertile) imagination. Sprinkled throughout the video are skits from a Vaudeville Variety Show, as well as an extended squeal through Tompkins Square. “Risque Reverie” has Darcy dealing with temptation; “The Amazing Ozwald” comes up against the intellect of Isabelle, Darcy’s inseparable doll-companion; and “May I Cut In,” has Darcy hypnotizing a woman in order to steal a dress, and eventually signing a contract with the devil. Highlights include Darcy’s animated, impressively eerie “Golden Shoes”, as well as Lisa Hammer’s 10-minute gem (THE ELABORATE) EMPIRE OF ACHE, starring our hostess. For sheer star power, there a brief duet with the late great Tiny Tim; plus a visit by Courtney Love, who makes dolls with Darcy. Of course, she doesn’t forget to include some lingerie catfighting and a spanking from “Daddy” to pull in the male viewers. But simply describing the skits doesn’t do them justice, and watching this tape without the proper drugs would be a mistake. Is it subtle? Ha! Strident? Absolutely! And that’s exactly what Darcy seems to be aiming for. She’s totally un-selfconscious in front of the lens, and winds up funny, demented, lovable, and fearlessly willing to mug for the camera. All in all, a warped, 62-minute ride into the mind of Dame Darcy. Be scared...

THREE FILMS BY CHRIS FRIERI (1996).

[Ghost Limb Films, 200 East 10th St. #502, New York, NY 10003]

SC has been covering director-photographer Frieri’s ever-growing underground legacy for years, and this trio of shorts is the latest addition to his filmography. It kicks off with MOJICA NO MOJO, which (grainily) chronicles Jose Mojica Marins’ 6/94 visit to St. Marks Place, for an East Village appearance in front of the Mojo Guitar shop. Essentially, this is silent home-movie-style footage of Marins (in his Coffin Joe regalia) hanging out on the sidewalk with all of his Lower East Side sycophants, as street-fixture Gary Balaban does his damndest to get passerbys’ interest. Only four minutes long, the only revelation in this non-event is why Marins wears that big top hat—when he removes it you realize it’s to cover his big bald head...For a dose of urban dementia, Frieri follows this up with THE WINDOW, a 17-minute, b&w slice of life that’ll be all too recognizable for any average Lower East Sider. Joseph James stars as a guy living in a shithole apartment, who hears grinding noises inside one of his kitchen cupboards and has to deal with a typical NYC rat. There’s not much to the film, but it’s the feeling you come away with that makes it work...The 38-minute HOT ROD

HEARSE is the most ambitious of the lot, and as usual for Frieri-fare, you can never tell what direction the story will take. A New Jersey garage band called Hearse has a typical Newark gig (one drunk fuck in the audience), and we follow these misfits from lousing up their day jobs, to their odder fetishes. They also have a parking lot encounter with a mysterious, often-transparent hearse, which could be from Hell, or Outer Space, or simply the director’s fried imagination. Later, back on stage, each is rewarded with a cool (often cruel) revenge fantasy—like a huge pizza with a ‘woman’ topping, spraying down a bitchy female employer with pesticide, or making their wife’s secret lover suck their dick. Though never high in the Coherency Department, this is nicely lensed and edited silliness, laced with tawdry thrills, gratuitous T&A, and cheap gore. It also features tunes by Hearse, such as “My Dead Dolly” as well as the title ditty.

THE ADVENTURES OF EL FRENETICO AND GO-GIRL. Tonight’s Episode: Crimes of Fashion (1996).

[Amusement Films, 153 East 87th St. #4A, New York, NY 10128]

Several issues back, I recommended the first (mis)adventure of that washed-up, wrestling warhorse El Frenetico, and his Asian sidekick, Go-Girl. Now, director Pat Bishow (THE SOULTANGLER) has returned with another lovable, half-hour installment, complete with campy cartoon opening credits and theme song. Charlie Pellegrino and Frances Lee reprise their roles as our delirious duo, and it kicks off when a fashion show is taken over by our Special Guest Villain, The Fop (Clark Donnelly), who kidnaps the city’s top models (which actually sounds more like a blessing to society). Yet despite his heartfelt cause of taking on the fashion world which shunned him, Mr. Fop screams, prances about, and is ultimately, rather annoying. Even his Knitting Needles of Death seem lame after awhile. That brings us back to the true reason to continue watching: Our masked, liquor-stained lard-ass, El Frenetico (who’s squeezed into blue tights which are far from flattering)! And after a grueling exercise regimen, it culminates in a combination brawl/fashion show, as Frenetico and an old nemesis battle it out, and Go-Girl gets help from the equally capable Soomi Kim. Is it silly? Absolutely! Cheap? Let’s not even discuss it. But what else would you expect from a series starring a drunken super-wrestler? Hell, this makes the old Santo films look like they were secretly directed by David Lean! Best of all, it revels in the stupidity of the modern-day fashion industry, with clothes so abysmal that I’m surprised they aren’t real. And wait until you check out Bishow’s superhero nightclub, with everyone in costume! It all adds up to more ridiculous fun from these incomparable crime-stoppers.

CYBERNATOR (1991).

[Darkness Films Inc., P.O. Box 4274, North Hollywood, CA. \$29.95]

In the previous SC, I raved about director Robert Rundle’s new short pic, HELL’S PARADOX. In response, Rundle sent me this early feature, which mostly proves

that the guy really got his shit together over the last few years. Hitting every conceivable sci-fi cliché, this is hoary, anemically-budgeted fare, which strives to be a real movie, but always looks like it was being filmed in the director’s living room. Set in a futuristic society where cyborgs are a common fixture, a group of killer “borgies” are on the prowl, blasting away at high-ranking bigwigs. Lonnie Schuyler stars as a hard-boiled cop who turns vigilante when his partner is killed, and brings his stripper girlfriend (Christina Peralta) along for the ride. Any script ‘surprises’ aren’t, and after uncovering a military conspiracy, Schuyler takes on the entire Cyborg Corps with a one-man assault on their decidedly low-tech complex. The cyborgs look more like punks with a chunk of metal pasted to their face, or tubes running out of their skull; Peralta actually wears hot pants during a secret raid (now that’s my idea of camouflage-wear!); and Schuyler is such a wooden hero that it’s no surprise he went onto short-term gigs in TV-slop like MELROSE PLACE and MODELS INC. The best thing about this pic is the legendary William Smith as Col. Peck, the mastermind behind this scheme—though he’s only in three brief scenes, the guy has more energy than anyone else within camera range.

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HOST LIMB FILMS INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS A CHRISTOPHER FRIERI FILM
 STARRING LEONARDO SLENADORIO · JAMES DIUNILEVY · STEVEN GAWRYLUK · DAVE LANGET · KANE KEENE
 COSTUME DESIGNER CHRISTINE MARTIN · GLORIA ORGASMA · MARK FUCILE · HEARSE'S JEFFREY CHRISTOPHER FRIERI

NEW RELEASES

HABIT (Glass Eye Pix; 1997). I know what you're thinking: Who needs another Lower East Side female vampire movie? I felt the same way until I saw this corrosive new feature from director-writer-star Larry Fessenden (who's been banging around the underground scene since the mid-'80s, with pics like *HOLLOW VENUS* and *NO TELLING*). In an edgy, open wound of a performance, Larry plays Sam, a thirtynothing sloppy drunk who's "committing suicide on the installment plan" and believes "all love ends in sadness." His girlfriend has moved out, he has scars on his arms from slicing himself up, and the guy jumpstarts each morning with a drink. Along the way, Fessenden captures the seediest aspects of urban life; and more important, for the first hour, the concept of vampirism isn't even mentioned. Instead it sucks you in as a Bukowski-esque drama of crazy love. Sam's life seems to change for the better when he meets a mysterious young beauty named Anna (Meredith Snaider) at a Halloween party, who at first, seems like an unlikely date for this lush with the missing front tooth. Of course, Anna has her odd side, which includes disappearing or appearing at the strangest times, as well as a kinky edge which leaves Sam with a series of ugly bites. But as he feels increasingly "sick," his outlook on the world becomes shakier, as we wonder if Anna is indeed a vampire, or whether Sam has simply fried his brain after years of excess. Along with terrific location footage, Fessenden expertly captures the most minute details of Sam's life (which makes you think he understands his character all too well). Better still, he strips vampirism of its usual trappings and re-energizes it with everyday madness. Despite budgetary constraints, *HABIT* is a beautifully realized vision which is also one of the best films I've seen this year.

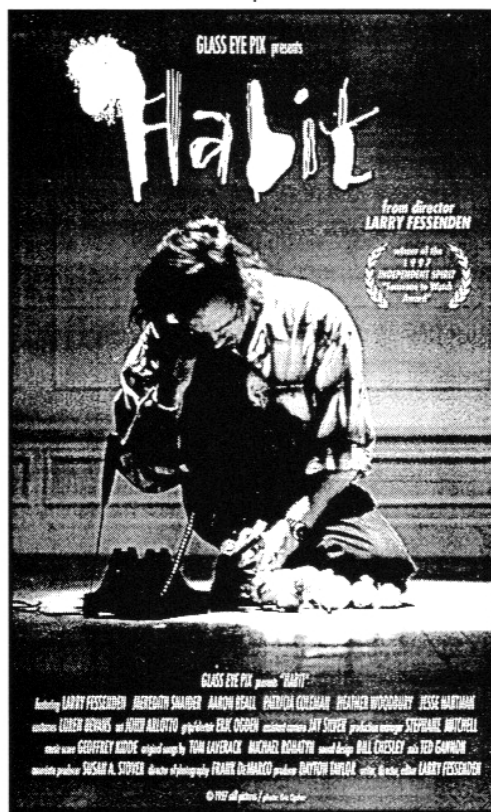
RAVAGE (Salt City Home Video; 1997). I'm usually pretty dubious (not to mention, merciless) when it comes to these types of shot-on-video, no-budget exploitation flicks. But in this (all too rare) instance, its bloodthirsty intensity and Ronnie Sontor's directorial chops make this one of the best new films of an increasingly dreary genre. It starts off on a good footing, as a wacko blows away a carload of homeboyz for a cheap thrill. Then, it just gets grimmer when widowed Missouri psychologist Gregory Burroughs leaves his two young daughters home alone, they wind up dead at this same sicko's hands, and pop is hellbent for revenge. From then on, Greg gets increasingly obsessed about tracking down this psycho-fuck, following him all the way to Chicago; while we see the guy on the loose, piling up an even more impressive body count. The story gets a tad convoluted along the way (with a surprise twin and a full-scale murder cult), but Sontor certainly knows his way around an action sequence, and keeps the plot rolling (and bleeding) along. As Greg, Mark Brazzale is a capable lead, and not your usual action hero by any means (imagine Charles Bronson crossed with George Wendt), while Dan Rowland makes a cruel, cold-hearted villain, in both of his incarnations. Despite its low budget, the camerawork is particularly fluid, there are some truly impressive set-pieces (such as a grisly police station shoot-'em-up), plus plot twists which will genuinely take you by surprise. This wild ride puts most other indie releases to shame with its filmmaking savvy and balls-out, blood-caked intensity.

DINOSAUR VALLEY GIRLS (E.I. Independent Cinema; 1997). First off, with a title this ridiculous, did you really expect a good movie? Of course not! And thank goodness, director-writer Donald F. Glut doesn't squash any of those early expectations. This sucks! Still, there are loads of bare tits, silly dialogue, bare tits, embarrassing performances, bare tits... Well, you get the picture... Jeff Rector plays action-movie superstar Tony Markham, who has visions of half-naked cave-girls, and while visiting a museum paleontologist (ex-*BLACULA* William Marshall),

uses a talisman to transport back to an era of grunting cavemen (who do little but fight and fart), bimbo cave-cuties (who live separately from the men), and cheesy dinosaurs (which are adept at knocking off the ladies' tops). *QUEST FOR FIRE*, it ain't. Tony is soon taken back to the cave-gal's rocky pad by Hea-Thor (Denise Ames), while all of the ladies (with SoCal-ish names like Bar-Bee and Buf-Fee) want sex from this hunka-hunka-modern-man. Unfortunately, once this goofy premise is set up, not a lot happens. Tony teaches the babes to fight back against male domination; there's a music video in the middle, with the cave-chicks googieing to the lame "Jurassic Pond"; and the climactic battle with an Allosaurus is as exciting as a trip to Amish country. Meanwhile, Karen Black turns up as Ro-Kell, the only over-50 cave-woman in the pack, who speaks only in grunts, wears an animal skin, and must've owed someone in the casting department a BIG favor. This dopey Cro-Magnonsense has FX that range from dicey to "They're kidding, right?" and plenty of gratuitous toplessness (proving that even back in prehistoric times, there were breast implants). Even within the mini-genre of stone-age sex comedies, this is pretty low in the pile.

SCREWED (1996). *SCREW* magazine creator Al Goldstein deserves to have a good, insightful documentary made about him and his place in the wild world of pornography. This ain't it. Instead, director Alexander Crawford only skims the surface of Goldstein's life, and certainly won't win over any new fans. This pic is all over the place. It begins with a photo-shoot with a couple half-naked chicks and "Little Mike" Anderson; follows Goldstein to his office and home; and talks to *SCREW*'s senior editors, Eric Danville and Dave Clark. But the best comes from maintenance man Cyrano, who accidentally discharged the loaded pump shotgun Goldstein keeps under his desk. Add some clips from Goldstein's "Midnight Blue" cable access TV-show, comments by the surprisingly candid Ivan Lerner ("As to whether or not I'll be sad when Al is dead---Well, he's not my friend. He's my boss..."), and Goldstein's admission that the show is primarily a way to ridicule any shit-stain who gets on his nerves. We also visit a few *SCREW* readers, who seem like the biggest pack of obsessive, lonely losers outside of a *STAR TREK* convention. For no apparent reason (outside of the cheap T&A), we also visit the set of the latest *SCREW*-produced porno movie. Most disappointing is when it tackles the subject of censorship. Sure, Ron Jeremy praises Goldstein for always battling for his First Amendment Rights, while Goldstein discusses his clockwork arrests during the late '60s. But just as it gets really interesting, the film suddenly moves on. Hey, at least Al has a good sense of humor about himself, even as he rages about his gold-digging ex-wife, Patty, or labels all women "parasites." The biggest laugh? For a disparaging opinion on Al, they recruit Guardian Angel windbag Curtis Sliwa, who loathes the entire sex biz and is the biggest asshole in the entire film.

GENERATION X-TINCT (E.I. Independent Cinema; 1997). This Michigan-lensed flick certainly has its cruel streak, as well as a script crammed with detestable, jobless, white-trash losers. Hell, these cretins were so close to my own background that it felt like a documentary at times. The story kicks into gear when a guy gets knifed for not paying his Mob debts, the wrongheaded Bobby (Mike Passion) goes psycho at his pal's death, and after much plot-padding (a police interrogation, hanging with his stoner buds), the film gets down to business. Somehow, the low-IQ'd Bobby believes that a straight-laced Yuppie was the killer, so he and his equally braindead friends put on ski masks, attack his home, and wind up beaten to a pulp by him. Then they try to buy a gun (from the guy who actually offed his pal, no less), as this quickly turns into a half-baked version of *DAZED AND CONFUSED* meets *DEATH WISH*. Bobby is far from a role model though, and I was



quickly chuckling at his lame-brained mock-machismo, which has him justifiably abused at every turn. He gets a car cigarette lighter burnt into his hand, a brick beaten to his skull, and even when Bobby acquires a gun, it's promptly stolen out of his car. This guy is a four-star loser, and the film works best as a caustic comedy of errors since, hard to believe, Bobby is such a wimpy creep that I was actually rooting for the rich Yuppie (please, kill me). Hell, Eddie Deezen is more threatening than this loudmouth... Writer-director Michele Pacitto gives the film an amoral, cynical edge, and though fitfully amusing, it's difficult to get too thrilled about a story centered around a jerk who talks big, screws up at every turn, and you wouldn't want to hang around with for five minutes in real life—much less an entire movie.



FUN (Spectrum Entertainment; 1994). Though this Canadian production snuck through theatres back in early '95, it inexplicably went without a US home video until just recently. It's a shame, because this is a compelling character study, lensed for a scant \$10 grand. Based on a play by scripter James Bosley, and surprisingly well-directed by Rafal Zielinski (who's primarily known for crappy, Canadian lensed slop like *SCREWBALLS*, or the Buddy Hackett/Yasmin Bleeth cult-abomination *HEY, BABE!*), the main drawing card are a pair of breakout performances. Alicia Witt (currently relegated to sitcom-ville as daughter Zoey on *CYBIL*) and Renée Humphrey (earlier, the star of Zielinski's *JAILBAIT*) play Bonnie and Hillary, two teens currently stuck in a youth slammer. From there on, the story shifts between this present-day, b&w footage, and color flashbacks of what led them to their incarcerated state. Slowly, the pieces come together. Their friendship lasted one single day, beginning as a roadside encounter, during which the girls matter-of-factly discuss their past (such as getting raped by their father) and go on a spree of unrepentant juvenilia, ending in a random thrill-killing of an old lady—all in the name of having 'fun'. Witt is hyper-active, Humphrey is brittle, and each young actress is unafraid of being annoying, immature, or acting like real, screwed-up teens. They're both remarkable, with capable support from Leslie Hope as a counselor and William R. Moses as a tabloid reporter covering the case. Too sensationalistic (particularly its bloody finale) to be mistaken for an art flick, this is steeped in a playful style and fascinating performances which propel its voyeuristic story to a fresh new level.

HIDEOUS! (*Full Moon*; 1997). There are two types of *Full Moon* releases. First, there are their crank-'em-out creature features, which are usually connected to some franchise (e.g. "Dollman Meets Puppetmaster Vs. Trancers in Demonic Toyland Part 2"). Then, on occasion, they release a movie so good that you can't believe it's from *Full Moon*... Alas, this latest effort from director Charles Band falls into the first category. It begins when a sewage worker fishes a gooey human mutation out of a sludge trap. He sells it to a sleazy company that deals in pickled human oddities, and it's eventually stolen by an obsessive collector, Dr. Lorca, who's entranced with its multi-eyed, hideous beauty. Of course, once the six-pack of cast members are trapped in the sinister sicko's castle, the half-pint creature comes to life, and brings a few of Lorca's other specimens back in the process. Though the idea of deformed fetuses on the rampage might sound like a grim idea, the movie is terminally dull. The monsters barely get to kill anyone, and the only truly demented moment is when one of 'em crawls under a blanket and sucks at a sleeping woman's bare tit. If you couldn't already guess, this is far from an expensive production. Band once again uses his own castle as the primary setting, there are only nine people in the entire cast (and three of them are gone after the first five minutes), and obviously not a dime was spent on hiring an honest-to-goodness scriptwriter. It's also sad when a quartet of latex puppets have more character than the humans. The only exception is scene stealer Jacqueline Lovell, who lounges about the set as Lorca's lovely sidekick, and in one scene wanders around snowy Romania in nothing but boots, hot pants, and a gorilla mask. Oh, the things one does for their Art.

POISON IVY: THE NEW SEDUCTION (New Line; 1997). Unlike the first two *IVY* pics, which featuring such teen queens as the (likably slutty) Drew Barrymore and the (lackluster) Alyssa Milano, this third installment shoots straight at crotch level, with loads of bared flesh from pouty, unknown Jaime Pressly (who looks like Traci Lords' talent-barren li'l sister). The plot is pure soap opera, with long-separated childhood friends Violet (Ivy's sister) and Joy reuniting after a dozen

years, and the moment Violet takes up Joy's offer to crash at her palatial home, the mindgames begins. First, Violet goes after the virginal Joy's hunky boyfriend, by plying him with cocaine and having her clothes conveniently dropping off. Oops! This nymphet also seduces Joy's horny dad, while moonlighting as a dominatrix (when spotted in her kinky attire and asked where she works, she replies "Denny's... It's under new management."). The rest of film has Violet manipulating these (stupid) characters, who are such a bunch of unlikable, rich idiots that you wish it would suddenly turn into a slasher pic. Well, in a pleasant surprise, it does, when Violet finally goes psycho and begins whittling down the cast members. As expected, the script uses any excuse for an extended sex scene—from a couple nude dips in the pool, to lots of generic schtupping. In fact, Pressly has barely been on-screen for five minutes when her character feels the need to take a long hot bath. And while her acting leaves much to be desired, her body certainly doesn't. Co-starring Susan Tyrrell in the thankless role of the haggard housekeeper; in terms of cut-rate sexploitation, this is a step up from the previous entry, but it's limp in every other department.

BORN IN FLAMES (*First Run*; 1983). It's taken 14 years for this underground classic to make it to US video, and seeing it nowadays, you realize just how shallow most current NYC indies actually are. Five years in the making, this is an often-rambly, always-intriguing dose of political science-fiction, which proves you can find brilliance on the most threadbare budget. Although director-editor Lizzie Borden went onto more high-profile fare such as the insightful *WORKING GIRLS* and far-from-inspired *LOVE CRIMES*, this is still her most impassioned work. Set ten years after the "War of Liberation"—a cultural revolution of socialist democracy—NYC looks about the same, with males still in charge and women still routinely repressed. Enter The Women's Army, who are labeled outlaws for aiding abused ladies and bicycling around Manhattan like a pack of pre-Guardian Angels. And when the founder of the Women's Army dies in police custody (chalked up as a "suicide"), it only helps pull together the various female factions—both black and white—for the first time. They take over CBS in the middle of a presidential broadcast, and eventually plan a bombing of the World Trade Center (which predates the real thing by nearly a decade). Despite its often sledgehammer rhetoric, there's an edginess to this story, with reality seeping from every frame. Admittedly, The Red Crayola's tune "Born in Flames" gets pretty annoying after its third run; yet even if its multi-viewpointed story gets a bit out of hand, it all comes together beautifully by the end. Starring Adele Berté, Jeanne Satterfield and Honey (as a radio D.J.), plus blink-and-you'll-miss-'em roles by director-to-be Kathryn Bigelow as a newspaper editor and Eric Bogosian as a CBS technician.



FLIRT (Columbia TriStar; 1996). I've always been a fan of director Hal Hartley's work, from *THE UNBELIEVABLE TRUTH* and *TRUST*, to *SIMPLE MEN* and *AMATEUR*. His latest consists of three shorts films and, on the surface, seems more like a playful exercise than a real movie, as he tells a nearly identical story in three different locales. But even the weakest Hartley pic is more worthwhile than most studio dreck. In the freestanding "New York February 1993", Bill Sage plays "an aimless flirt", whose current girlfriend (Parker Posey) is going to Paris and asks if there's a future between them. Instead, he wonders if he can move onto the recently-separated Margaret, whose distraught hubby (Martin Donovan) turns up with a bottle of Jack and a gun. The best of the lot,

this plays like a reunion party for Hartley vets, including Robert Burke on the toilet and Karen Sillas as an ER doc... For "Berlin 1994", Hartley transposes the script overseas, but now it involves Dwight, a black young homosexual and his lover Johann, who's leaving for NYC and urges for similar commitment. Co-starring Elina Löwensohn as a nurse, while the faces and dynamics might be different, their angst is ultimately the same... Finally, for "Tokyo March 1995", Hartley really begins to twist his yarn (as if he's as tired of the basics as the viewer is) with Hartley's wife Miho Nikaido as the flirt, and Hal himself as her lover, who has to go to LA for a filmmaking gig... It's a strange way to pad out an early short film to feature length, giving Hartley the opportunity to rethink his tale—culturally, structurally and cinematically. Still, fans in the mood for typical Hartley fare will be left intrigued, yet ultimately unsatisfied, by this lightweight endeavor.

THE ATROCITY EXHIBITION (1997). Based on the book by J.G. Ballard and seemingly influenced by Cronenberg's clinical style, this indie effort from Jonathan M. Weiss makes the film version of CRASH look like a Frank Capra project. It's an ultra-bizarre puzzle which offers few answers, and is so totally out there that I can't imagine a non-stoned distributor giving it a second look. Since I've never read the original work, I can't say if this is a successful adaptation, but it certainly is a disjointed, difficult mind-fuck. I enjoyed it, but with severe reservations. Graced with segment titles like "The Geometry of Her Face As a Diagram for a Murder," at its core is a brilliant professor who believes "humanity is an Atrocity Exhibition, in which he is an unwilling spectator." Amidst visions of a young woman with a radiation-like facial burn, he's working on his own vision of WWII, during which "blitzkriegs will be fought out on the spinal battlefields." Along with his lectures about sex-death scenarios, the visuals are laced with (often graphic) imagery, demonstrating the link between science and pornography, including old A-bomb victim footage, grim face-lift surgery, JFK's assassination, and a lecture about the sexual appeal of celebrity auto-fatalities. He then picks up a fashion model, Karen, and screws her in the backseat of a car while she wears a photo-mask of Ronald Reagan (?)...Weiss certainly has an eye for disorientation. But despite its fascinating ideas and enticing imagery, the film is never able to connect the two. Lacking any real drama, the narrative is (understandably) difficult to get a fix on—much less, give us any reason to care about the characters. In a rare cinematic occurrence, this offers up *too many* ideas, yet never delves deep enough into any of them. And after two full hours, this dementia runs out of steam and ends with a whimper, instead of a bang. Fascinating, but excruciating. Starring Victor Slezak, Michael Kirby, and Anna Juvander.

HELLBLOCK 13 (1997). This trilogy of cut-rate horror yarns starts out like the usual fan-nerd dreck, complete with an appearance by Gunnar Hansen. In the framing segments, he plays a burly executioner gabbing with a female serial killer (Debbie Rochon) who's on her Last Meal (yet still manages to have pristine make-up) and admits to writing stories—with inspiration coming from the souls of past inmates. Happily, the following vignettes are cruel enough to overcome this creaky framework. In the first, two children disappear and their oddly uncon-

cerned mom is later haunted by creepy messages in alphabet blocks, with plenty of cheap thrills as her dead 'n' bloated kids return for revenge. Second up, we get a battered teen housewife (Jennifer Peluso) and her redneck hubbie. But after one smack too many, Heidi Mae visits a witch who lives across the street, and mixes up a spell that leads to a lame (albeit gruesome) climax. In the final episode, a biker gang stops at a "sacred place" during a dope run to Mexico, where they dig up the grave of a dead biker chick, Big Rhonda. Along with the usual beer swilling and lesbo fondling, the newest member of the gang sees Rhonda come to life in all of her pneumatic glory (briefly played by J.J. North)...Though little more than your basic horror pic, director Paul Talbot keeps it moving, keeps it grim, and delivers more than you'd expect from this type of seemingly generic fodder.

CONTACT BLOWN (1995). This odd little assassin-fest is graced with scattershot joys and a likable lead. But above all, I've got to commend writer-director Nathan Thompson for getting this homespun video into local Blockbusters! I still hate the fucking chain, but it's good to know that indie filmmakers have a chance to subvert their customers. Spencer Ross stars as North African hit-man Anton, Christopher Mack is his East German partner, and while in NYC, awaiting info on their next job, they bounce from one contact to another. Plus, like most tourists to the Big Apple, they wind up killing a couple Feds, consulting with the local Mob, and murdering a few street punks out of boredom. Meanwhile, Leslie Body plays an FBI agent on their trail, lugging along a couple of wiseass Brooklyn cops who make Toody & Muldoon look like Rhodes Scholars. The entire film shifts its tone when Anton winds up in the middle of the woody Catskills, and begins methodically picking off the cops on his trail---as well as a half-dozen female camp counselors and a pick-up truck full of beer-swilling poachers. And suddenly, this takes a turn into FRIDAY THE 13TH territory! Hey, why not? If you run dry of ideas, why not chuck the original idea, and try something else? Though his character lacks dimension, Ross himself has plenty of presence and comes off like a minor-league Ving Rhames. And while the script has pockets of smart dialogue---as well as the requisite bloodshed---I continually wished it was more focused and character-driven...One additional gripe: Did we *really* need to see goofy outtakes over the credits? What the hell is this, STROKER ACE, PART 2?

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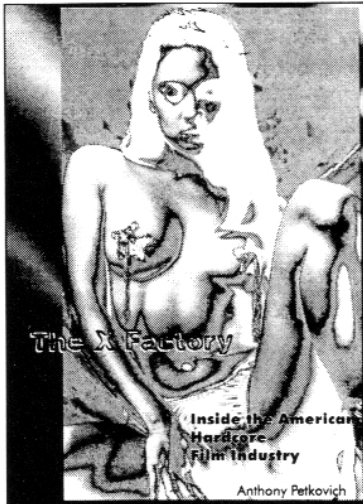
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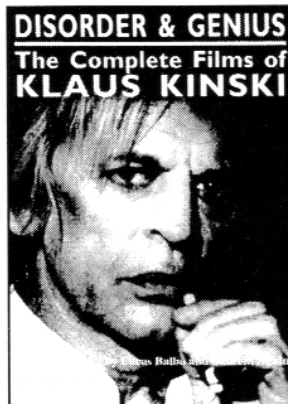
THE X FACTORY: INSIDE THE AMERICAN HARDCORE FILM INDUSTRY by Anthony Petkovich (Headpress/Critical Vision; £12.95. US orders: \$21.95 ppd. to AK Press & Distribution, P.O. Box 40682, San Francisco, CA 94140-0682).

If you have any interest in the world of Hardcore Pornographic Cinema---whether as a well-callused observer or just a curious film historian---this book is an essential addition to your library. Peeling back the layers of hear-say, this is an insightful profile of the (straight) porn world as told by the people who keep these films coming. After a brief introduction, laying out the history of the X-rated movie in the US (from the

Golden Age of the '70s, to the present) as well as his own personal initiation to the genre, Petkovich digs deep into 21 interviews with various porn actresses (Chasey Lain, Stephanie Swift, and Lana Sands describing John Wayne Bobbitt's re-sewn cock), many of whom are "now either mainstays, retired, or dead." But the book is at its best when getting the dirt straight from the filmmakers themselves, including surprisingly-honest talks with X-directors Gregory Dark, John Leslie, Patrick Collins, and Bruce Seven. Best of all are Petkovich's on-set visits, such as his hilarious (albeit occasionally grim) commentary from the set of *THE WORLD'S LARGEST GANG BANG 2*. In fact, his skillful commentary provides the brightest moments of the book---whether he's watching a stripper getting tossed off the stage for getting too friendly with the audience, or ripping on a porn-starlet's pushy manager. And don't expect any political correctness, since he's all-too-happy to let his opinions of the "highly fuckable" actresses hang out like wet laundry. I only wish Petkovich had dug up some of the older legends in the field, to get a broader view of the scene. Nevertheless, this is an amazing volume. Intelligent, skanky, and often funny as hell, you don't *really* know the industry you're jerking off to until you've read this book.

DISORDER & GENIUS: THE COMPLETE FILMS OF KLAUS KINSKI by Lucas Balbo and Laurent Aknin (Midnight Media).

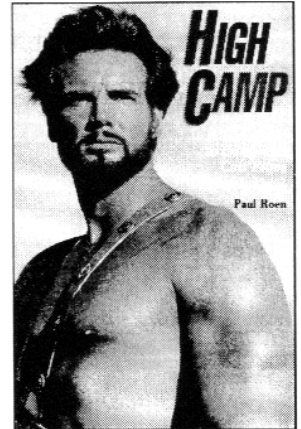
Klaus Kinski might be long gone, but his ever-charismatic cinematic legacy lives on with the help of this handy reference guide to his lengthy career. Arthouse fans know him from Herzog hits such as *FITZCARRALDO* and *AGUIRRE, THE WRATH OF GOD*; spaghetti western watchers remember him from *THE GREAT SILENCE*; while US horror fans recall him stealing every scene in '80s schlock such as *VENOM* and *CRAWLSPACE*. But believe it or not, in just over 40 years, Kinski brought his wild-eyed presence to over 130 films. A few were classics, many were competent EuroTrash, and even when they totally sucked, Kinski was able to rise above the cinematic sewage. After a brief overview of his life and work, the majority of this slick, 40-page booklet is devoted to his extensive filmography. There we get alternative titles, dates, directors, stars, and a brief plot description--in addition to Klaus' role in the movie. Laced with photos and ad slicks, this is essential for any



hardcore Kinski-phile. In addition, it also has enough hard info that I was finally able to figure out what no-talent actors and directors Kinski was bitching about in his controversial (not to mention, hilariously acerbic) autobiography.

HIGH CAMP: A GAY GUIDE TO CAMP AND CULT FILMS VOL. 2 by Paul Roen (Leyland Publications; \$14.95).

This follow-up to Roen's entertaining first volume once again covers a wide array of celluloid campiness. In typical A-Z fashion (which is the only typical thing in the book), he dives into nearly 200 worthy titles---the good, the bad, and the unbearably kitsch. From queer arthouse pics like *POISON*, to cult oddities such as *THE GAY DECEIVERS* (a pair of straight guys evade the draft by pretending to be a couple), to Ron Ormond's hilarious Christian claptrap *THE GRIM REAPER*. In addition, nearly a dozen Joan Crawford films *somehow* managed to sneak into the book. Much of the time Roen covers older titles from the '30s through '50s, but he also gets pretty obscure at times (thanks to Video Search of Miami) with, believe it or not, *three* Jess Franco films: *VENUS IN FURS*, *99 WOMEN*, and *LOVE LETTERS OF A PORTUGUESE NUN*. Of course, various early-'60s peplum make a muscular appearance, there's a wide array of Ken Russell fare, and this time around, Roen also touches upon some of the more respected gay porno pics, such as Joe Gage's *KANSAS CITY TRUCKING COMPANY*. All the while, Roen brings an insightful, always-humorous style to his descriptions (e.g. *BOMBA AND THE JUNGLE GIRL*: "a godsend to chicken fanciers of the late 'Forties"), as well as an unapologetic fondness for some lesser known hunks, such as Steve Cochran (regarding *QUANTRILL'S RAIDERS*: "Steve gets tied up in a chair, which means there are several full-color bondage shots of his nipples and hairy chest-flesh straining against the cords."). Sprinkled with photos of Roen's faves, from Mae West and Sal Mineo, to Sabu and strapping *HERCULES*-star Steve Reeves (who graces the cover), this is an invaluable guide for anyone in the closet, out of the closet, or who barely knows what the hell a closet is.



JACKIE CHAN: INSIDE THE DRAGON by Clyde Gentry III (Taylor Publishing; \$18.95).

Action icon Jackie Chan has been astounding audiences for over a quarter-century, but it isn't until recently that US moviegoers have gotten the chance to see him on the big screen in a multiplex environment (alas, usually with US-studio imposed dubbing and cuts). Well, this photo-packed book is a solid bet for any new fans longing for info on Chan's lengthy career and unparalleled success. Primarily, the book charts Jackie's filmography, beginning with his more generic '70s chopsocky pics, to Hong Kong stardom, and finally his long-overdue international acclaim. There's a lengthy, detailed analysis of each movie, including behind-the-scenes anecdotes from a variety of sources, and Gentry's own opinions on its success. Unfortunately, the book seems a little light when approaching Chan's more personal, off-the-set life, and consequently, might be a little redundant to anyone who's already seen most of his movies. Instead, some of the most interesting portions involve peripheral details, such as Jackie's 1980 appearance on *THE MIKE DOUGLAS SHOW*; the difference between the US and (Chan's supervised) Asian cut of *THE PROTECTOR*; and the fact that, despite Miramax's "the only action star who does all of his own stunts" claim for *RUMBLE IN THE BRONX*, his amazing leap between buildings was actually performed by director Stanley Tong. In addition, Gentry concludes this volume with an analysis of the unique elements of the HK action genre---including editing, directing, fight choreography, and (of course) humor---and lists (arguably) Jackie's 10 Best Fight Scenes and his Seven Best Films.

VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS

Sure, it can be frustrating trying to locate the movies I've reviewed in SHOCK CINEMA. That's why I continue to print this handy listing of some of the coolest places to buy these mind-roasting videos...So break open your kids' piggy banks, and drop these companies a line.

ALPHA BLUE ARCHIVES, Dept. SH, P.O. Box 16072, Oakland, CA 94610. E-mail: archives@sirius.com. A terrific collection of the harshest sex-pics from the jismhouse past, including softcore gems, nudie-roughies and vintage porn.

BLACKEST HEART MEDIA, c/o Shawn Smith, P.O. Box 3376, Antioch, CA 94531-3376. Shawn's extensive listing features some of the nastiest films on the planet, plus video dementia that'll have you laughin' your drunken ass off. \$3 gets you his huge catalog, which includes amazing t-shirts and CD's.

BOOTLEG LIFE, P.O. Box 138545, Chicago, IL 60613. These degenerates are reportedly pretty slow following up on their requests (probably because they're too busy jerking off to their own videos), but they also have some of the raunchiest XXX-'n'-fetish pics from around the globe. Please include signed age statement.

CREATURE FEATURE VIDEO, P.O. Box 602, Dept. SC2, Northford, CT 06472. E-mail: CFVhorrors@aol.com. A collection of all the hottest genres, including obscure EuroTrash, uncut horror, giant monsters, and plenty of sexy babes. Send a postcard for their complete catalog.

DUNWICH VIDEO, P.O. Box 577035, Chicago, IL 60657-7035. A gritty catalog featuring an array of skanky gems, including EuroSleaze, Asian action, Mondo pix, and some of the nastiest splatter available.

JUST FOR THE HELL OF IT, Dept. SC, P.O. Box 19, Butler, NJ 07405. Featuring the best from the Deuce era and beyond, including titles you won't find anywhere else. Their hilarious catalog is \$3 (checks made out to Mike Decker).

LUMINOUS FILM & VIDEO WURKS, P.O. Box 1047, Dept. SC, Medford, NY 11763. One of my faves, offering everything from ultra-obscure European sex pics and over-the-top spaghetti westerns, to unreleased-in-the-US arthouse fare. Excellent quality dubs, and each comes with full color packaging.

PHANTOM VIDEO, P.O. Box 16-3604, Miami, FL 33116. A wealth of ultra-sleazy videos, including gory, uncut EuroTrash and triple-X dementia from around the world. \$2 gets you their catalog.

SHOCKING IMAGES, P.O. Box 601972, Dept. SC, Sacramento, CA 95860. E-mail: Shokimag@inreach.com. Offering up rare exploitation videos, factory-direct Asian titles, laserdiscs, and import CD's. The complete catalog is \$3.

SHOCKING VIDEOS, c/o Mark Johnston, HC-77 Box 111, Hinton, WV 25951. A terrific selection of cinematic obscurities---from the usual grue, to incredible grindhouse classics that have never made it to legit video. Send \$3 and a 21+ age statement for their huge, illustrated catalog.

SINISTER CINEMA, P.O. Box 4369, Medford, OR 97501-0168. A mind-boggling catalog crammed with classic horror, serials, silents, westerns, jungle camp, drive-in-style double bills and more. (Tell 'em you read about them in SHOCK CINEMA, and maybe they'll finally pony up for a paid ad).

SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO, P.O. Box 33664, Seattle, WA 98133. A jaw-dropping array of grindhouse sexploitation and beyond. Their mind-blowing catalog is \$5. If you don't have one yet, what the hell's stopping you?!

STARLIGHT VIDEO, Dept. SC, P.O. Box 1503, Miami, FL 33152. This video source sells uncut Euro-erotica, horror rarities, and many hard-to-find classics from the wide world of sleaze. \$3 gets you their catalog.

TAPES OF TERROR, 6226 Darnell, Dept. SC, Houston, Texas 77074. Hitting all the genres, their inventory ranges from sleazy rarities and '50s drive-in schlock, to the tops in EuroTrash. Send a buck for their newly updated catalog.

VIDEO DUNGEON, P.O. Box 873, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688. Features an array of rare, uncut schlock---including European horror, Asian weirdness and ultra-sleazy sexploitation such as the uncut LOVE CAMP 9. Their illustrated catalog is \$3 (all checks payable to M. Wilson).

VIDEO JUNKIE, P.O. Box 903, San Jose, CA 95106. Offering uncut flicks from Euro-auteurs such as Argento and Fulci, plus plenty of grim obscurities. Their catalog is \$3, or visit their website at: <http://www.vidjunkie.com>.

VIDEO SEARCH OF MIAMI, P.O. Box 16-1917, Miami, FL 33116-1917. E-mail: VSOM@aol.com. A one-of-a-kind mix of overseas delights, including cannibal movies, giallos, Asian sexploitation, and arthouse auteurs. They even subtitle many of their favorite pics! Write for their mind-blowing, free catalog.

VIDEO WASTELAND, 214 Fair Street, Berea, OH 44017-1554. In addition to a huge array of books, mags, posters, and soundtracks (their sale catalog is \$3), VW offers a mail-order rental service, featuring 1000's of hard-to-find titles!

FUNERAL PARTY: VOLUME TWO. Edited by Shade Rupe (511 6th Avenue, No. 325, New York, NY 10011; \$17.95 + \$3.50 postage).

Bigger and better than the first FUNERAL PARTY, this gorgeous sophomore edition covers the wonderful world of death and violence at its most extreme. 128 pages thick, it's crammed with a wide range of equally demented (but always talented) contributors. Controversial cover-artist Trevor Brown gets to (rightfully) bitch about the censorship imposed on his work; director Ulli Lommel (TENDERNESS OF THE WOLVES) is interviewed; Jack Stevenson gives us a tour of America's sleaziest tabloids; there's a profile of the often-grisly Aboutface Theatre Company; and the backpages are crammed with reviews of outrageous new book and video releases. One-third of this PARTY is also devoted to short works of fiction, and while uniformly well-written, several of the authors' extreme shock-erotica left me cold---often becoming so self-serious they seem to suck all of the joy out of their obsession. Personally, I prefer the book's real-life articles and profiles. But above all, this is a beautiful work, loaded with artwork---much of which is sure to offend---and always pushing the envelope in an effort to shed light on the darker niches of human ecstasy.

PHOEBE LEGERE: "Last Tango in Bubbleland" (Random).

The fabulous Ms. Legere is best known to cult film fans for playing The Toxic Avenger's blind girlfriend in Parts 2 and 3. To be honest, never having heard Legere's music before (but aware of her reputation), I didn't know what to expect. My only hope was that I wouldn't cringe too badly. Well, fuck me. Because this is one helluva album, which crosses every possible musical genre---from Reggae, Dance, Pop, Folk, whatever---and sucks you in with Legere's infectious voice and love songs which joyously slice to the heart of desire. The best of the dozen tunes include "Amazing Love", "Lady Friday", "NY Nightmare", "Love Bubble" ("I am in an emotional bubble./ I'm so high I don't want to come down."). Oh hell, I enjoyed them all (and don't forget to search out the live-recorded mystery tune, buried deep on Track 34)...Beautifully melodic, with lyrics that twist tight like a lover's caress, Legere also gets to show off her impressive four-octave range, as well as her skills on the Titano accordion. Soaked in emotion, steeped in reality, and performed with all the passion and skill you could ask for, this one is a keeper. Produced by Tristan Avakian, who (in a needless bit of trivia) is the son of the late Aram Avakian, director of such all-time favorites as END OF THE ROAD and 11 HARROWHOUSE.



MAGS, ZINES & SMALL-PRESS PUBLICATIONS

ALTERNATIVE CINEMA #11 (P.O. Box 371, Glenwood, NJ 07418). This slick publication gets points for its goal of promoting independent cinema. Unfortunately, this "transitional" edition (published while in between editors) is little but ads and puff pieces on the usual convention slop. Let's hope the new staff doesn't simply kiss ass with its coverage.

ANNABEL LEE: Numero Peich (Rubén Lardín, P.O. Box 2191, Sabadell 08200 BCN Spain; \$5). Since I don't speak Spanish, I couldn't understand a word of this slick overseas mag, packed with comics, sleazy pix, various reviews, and articles as diverse as a history of the band Queen to an interview with Luigi Cozzi.

ASIAN CULT CINEMA #17 (P.O. Box 16-1919, Miami, FL 33116; \$6, or 6 issues for \$30). ACC just keeps getting bigger, better and more colorful, with all of the hottest info on the stars and filmmakers from across the Pacific. The latest is 64-pages (!), and includes an interview with Kinji Fukasaku, a look at Indian horror pics, and an appreciation of the late great King Hu.

CARBON 14 #11 (P.O. Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125; e-mail: carbon@voicenet.com; \$18 for 4 issues). Covering the best of our subversive culture, this terrific mag features interviews with Al Goldstein; artists Judith Schaechter and Kaz; tons of obscure indie CD reviews; plus Dan Taylor's always-incredible Exploitation Retrospect insert (this time around, featuring porno-queen Julie Rage).

CASHIERS DU CINEMART #7 (P.O. Box 2401, Riverview, MI 48192-2401; \$5 for 3 issues). A digest laced with editor Mike White's always insightful, often hilarious takes on film, video and beyond. Moving to a newsprint format, it includes interviews with Monte Hellman and Jack Hill, plus an article citing the similarities between Jerry Lewis and Rudy Ray Moore (?).

CHATTY CATHY #2 (Calder Square, P.O. 10919, State College, PA 16805-0919). The cover price says \$1, but send Cathy a couple more bucks for postage, because this weighs in at a monstrous 90 pages! The special "Everything Porn Issue" tackles the history of pornography, tales as a video store clerk, hilarious clippings, and many personal tales of Cathy's fascination with other peoples' fascination toward smut. Excellent.

DELIRIUM #5 (14 Thorpedale Road, London, N4 3BL, United Kingdom). This gorgeously-produced "Essential Guide to Bizarre Italian Cinema" is packed with information, photos, artwork, and dozens of lengthy, well-written reviews. The latest edition also features interviews with Argento and Stivalletti, and if you're a fan of pastaland trash, this mag is as good as it gets.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CINEMATIC TRASH v.1 (Mason Storm, P.O. Box 3137, Cumbernauld, Glasgow G67 2AT, Scotland). The premiere issue of this thin xerox-'zine tackles the wonderful world of blaxploitation, with several reviews of classic films, soundtrack CD's, and books. A tad lightweight for blaxploitation addicts (like myself).

FISTS OF FURY #1 (Midnight Media, The Barn, Upton Lodge, Hamerton Road, Upton, Cambs, PE17 5YA, England). Devoted to the Golden Age of Kung Fu Cinema, this polished UK mag devotes an amazing amount of space to '70s fare that went virtually unnoticed back when they first played The Deuce. There's also a profile of Ho Chung Tao (Bruce Li), and a lengthy look at Bruce Lee's *Game of Death*. Informative, obsessive and highly recommended.

FLOPHOUSE #1 (Jim Lucio, 80 East 3rd Street #14, NY, NY 10003; \$3.95). The premiere issue of this guide to "pop trash sleaze culture" is a fun, good-looking package, featuring a history of women-in-prison flicks, an interview with San Francisco's Ginger Coyote, and (best of all) sick news items and hilarious fake ads.

GRAVEDIGGER'S UNION v.3 #1 (Jeff Allard, 314 Nottingham St., Springfield, MA 01104; \$3). This 24-page digest is packed with opinions on recent and classic horror films, including reviews of current fright fare, along with a pair of Top 25 terror films of all time (and exhibit their good taste by including wonderful oddities like *The Rapture* and *Safe*).

GOREHOUND #25 (PL 178, 00521 Helsinki). I couldn't understand a word of this well-made film mag from Finland. Still, if you understand the language, you'll find a lengthy look at blaxploitation (complete with a couple dozen reviews), an interview with Jack Hill, plus film, video and book reviews.

GRINDHOUSE #10 (Vincent Basilicato, 70-51 J. Aloma Ave, Winter Park, FL 32792). It's been six years since the previous edition of this xerox-'zine, and after an apology for running a 'little' late, Vincent digs in with a weird array of film & video reviews, a description of the Florida media scene, and a (justifiable) trashing of a pinheaded local movie critic.

LIQUID CHEESE #4 (Dave Kosanke, 8123 West Margaret Lane, Franklin, WI 53132; e-mail: dkosanke@aol.com; \$3.50). Promising "movies and music to mangle your mind," this is essentially a review-'zine, covering many recent film, video and laserdisc releases. There's even an "appreciation" of Traci Lords (for those unaware of her many assets).

MEDIA SCENE #6 (Media Publications, 2 Leswin Place, London, N16 7NJ, United Kingdom; single copies are \$5 Cash, or \$14 for 6-issues). Every issue of this British digest features info and interviews with the tops in cinematic trash. More important, most of the mag is devoted to Media Publications' extensive mail order catalog of 'zines and books---many which are impossible to find in the US.

MIDNIGHT MARQUEE #53 (Gary J. Svehla, 9721 Britinay Lane, Baltimore, MD 21234; \$5, or \$15 for 3). This hefty journal devoted to the genre classics celebrates its 34th year, and is always loaded with well-written, informative articles. The latest features *The Brain That Wouldn't Die* and *Stranger on the Third Floor*, while "Movies We Hate!" gives all of their writers a chance to vent.

MONDO CINE #3 (Roger Leatherwood, P.O. Box 10597, Oakland, CA 94610; \$2.50). Unlike most film

'zines, this deals directly with the art and industry of film. This issue covers the business of home video--from its earliest history to the present--examining the financial side, as well as how it changed the entertainment world.

OUTRÉ #9 (Outré Subscriptions, P.O. Box 1900, Evanston, IL 60204; \$20 for a 4-issue sub). Without question, one of my favorite magazines. Each issue plumbs the waters for interviews and tributes to the greats and maybe-not-so greats of "UltraMedia." The latest issue interviews Bruce Dern, and continues their coverage of Gerry Anderson and The Ventures. Of course, their companion publication, **FILMFAX** (same address; \$30 for a 6-issue sub), focuses on the world of schlock cinema. Both are essential additions to your library.

POP-LIFE #5 (Timothy E. Friend, P.O. Box 34, Belton, MO 64012-0034). Film Flotsam-contributor Friend's digest-sized 'zine is devoted to "disposable culture" and features reviews for oldie faves like Sinatra's *The Lady in Cement*, a look back at the comic book "Man-Thing", while Hijinx Redondo reminisces about dangerous toys such as the Clacker.

SAMHAIN #62 (77 Exeter Road, Topsham, Exeter, Devon EX3 0LX, England; \$5.95). The latest edition of "Britain's Longest Running Horror Film Magazine" features an interview with the makers of *Evil Ed*, a look at Ken Russell's eclectic career, plus pieces on *Crash*, *Anaconda*, and reviews aplenty.

SCHLOCK #25 (John Chilson, 3841 4th Avenue #192, San Diego, CA 92103; e-mail: newslne@thegroup.net). This "journal of low-brow cinema and culture" features an article on the demise of the San Diego downtown theatre scene, a lengthy interview with HK director Mabel Cheung Yuen-Ting; plus video, jazz, and 'zine reviews.

SHEMP! Low-Life Culture Magazine #21 (Larry Yoshida, 593 Waikala Street, Kahului, HI 96732; \$1 + 2 stamps). This slim, 12-page xerox-'zine is celebrating its fourth year, and it's still as deliberately crude as ever. Laced with various record and video reviews, plus clip art galore.

TAIL SPINS #29 (P.O. Box 1860, Evanston, IL 60204; \$15 for a six issue sub, or \$3 for sample copy). The latest dose of this cool music/film/whatever mag features an overview of the blaxploitation genre and their soundtracks, a talk with The Spiderbabies, plus endless pages of music & 'zine reviews.

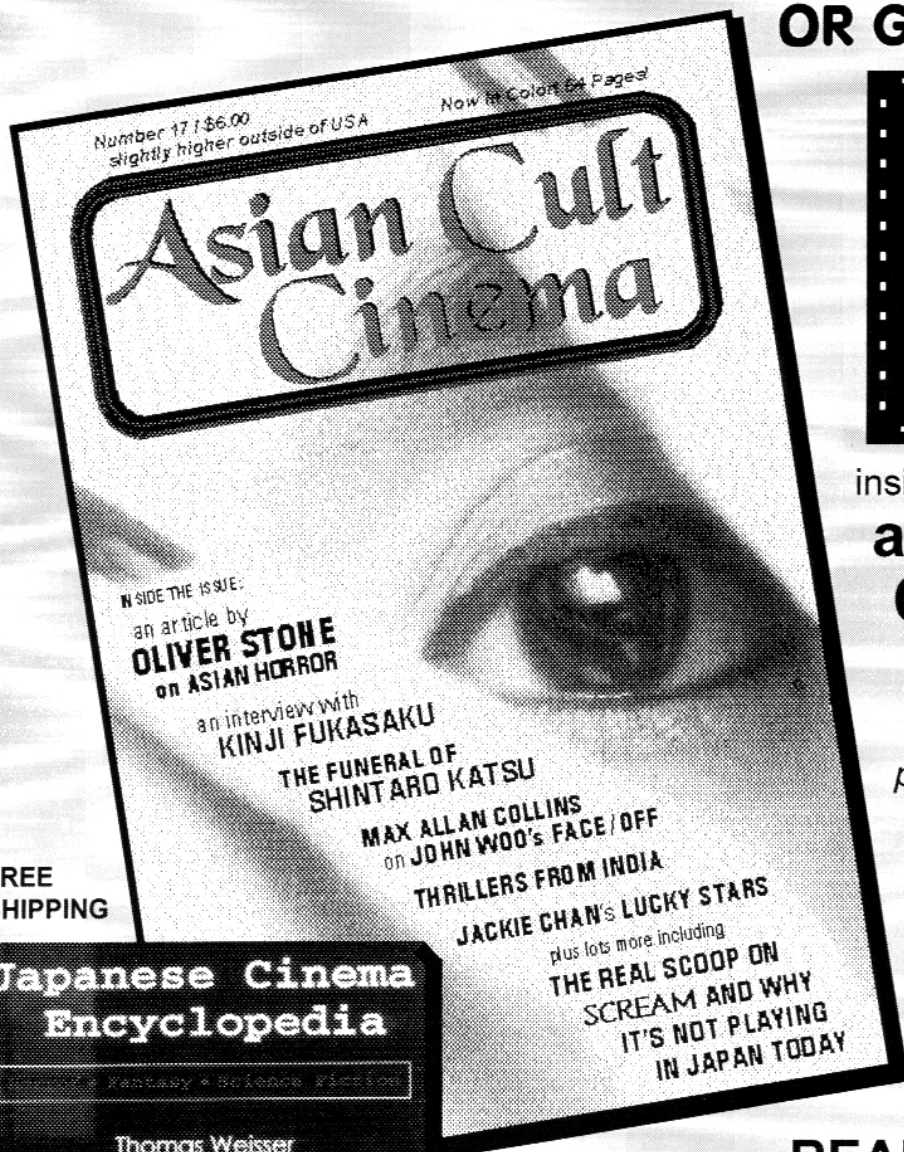
TERMINAL BRAIN ROT #10 (Mike Huegen, P.O. Box 1094, Cincinnati, OH 45201-1094; \$2). The latest edition of this digest is crammed with plenty of video and record reviews, cartoons, a visit to a KISS concert, plus an interview with Alan Vega, the lead vocalist for Suicide.

UNCUT #5 (Midnight Media, The Barn, Upton Lodge, Hamerton Road, Upton, Cambs, PE17 5YA, England). Since the UK censors are renowned for butchering films, this informative UK mag digs up uncut videos and revels in their depravity. Packed with lengthy reviews and lovingly written, the newest also features an interview with John Carpenter.

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